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**DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION AND
EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIA: THE CASE OF
THE PRESS, 1999-2002**

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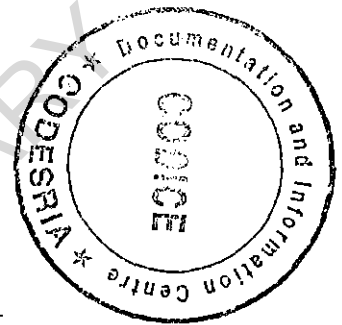
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**DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION AND
EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIA: THE CASE OF THE
PRESS, 1999-2002**

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CHRISTIANA G.E. BEST (MRS)

Ph.D/FASS/15852/97-98



Being a Ph.D Dissertation submitted to the Postgraduate School,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in partial fulfilment of the award
of Doctor of Philosophy in Drama (Development Communication)
Department of English and Drama, Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello
University, Zaria.

2004.

DECLARATION

I, CHRISTIANA G. E. BEST, hereby declare that this dissertation is written by me and that it is a product of my own research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted anywhere previously in application for a higher degree. All sources of information used in the course of writing, including quotations have been duly acknowledged by means of citation and a bibliography.



CHRISTIANA G. E. BEST

CERTIFICATION

This dissertation, entitled **DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIA: THE CASE OF THE PRESS, 1999-2002**, has been carefully read and approved as having satisfied the conditions governing the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Drama (Development Communication) of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and it is approved for its contribution to knowledge.

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POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

Date

DEDICATION

To

My husband, Ezekiel Gaya Best , Ph.D.

Our children...

Balmun, Sekyen, Chinret, and Kyermun,

And

Grand children...

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It is by God's grace alone that I can accomplish anything. So, I must start by thanking the Author and Finisher of my Faith – my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ – who is, who was and who is to come; for whom and through whom all things are accomplished. To Him be the glory and honour forever.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how the press engendered genuine participation and enhanced empowerment in Nigeria between 1999 and 2002. To achieve this objective, a survey, using questionnaires, was conducted in six Nigerian cities, representing the six geopolitical regions in Nigeria and Abuja, the Federal Capital.

Six hundred (600) questionnaires were distributed and subjects were picked randomly according to a distribution of 100 in each city. The data analysis was done on computer using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Our findings demonstrate that the existing press systems in Nigeria do not serve the developmental needs of the totality of Nigerians – but serve an insignificant but powerful urban elite, while relegating the majority of Nigerians. It is also clear from this study that this failure of the press is due mostly to the undemocratic structures of media institutions which operate in a vertical, authoritarian direction, with the concentration of power, resources and services of the media in urban centres. These media, therefore, transmit the values and ideology of the ruling elite.

Thus, the study concludes that the Nigerian press, in its current structure, focus, content, language and flow of information, only caters for a limited number of urban Nigerians and consequently does not promote the much sought after participation and empowerment for developmental purposes.

Hence, the study recommends the democratisation of the Nigerian communications system by increasing participation that will enhance grassroots

empowerment and development. These communications media, especially radio and the vernacular press, need to be located amongst the rural populace. This will give the majority of Nigerians access not only to the messages produced by others, but also the means to produce and distribute their own messages – thus promoting participation and empowerment.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is a basic social process and it is used in many ways in various disciplines. Indeed, as any researcher should know, no discipline dealing with any aspect of society, be it literature, sociology, political science, anthropology, economics, psychology, drama or linguistics and so forth, can escape the phenomenon of communication (Fauconnier, 1973: 11).

The term *communication* encompasses the bulk of social behaviour, since the vital force of human relations is man's capacity to send and receive both intended and unintended messages in different ways (Hall, 1989).

In this sense, communication permeates the social environment and is to be found in every aspect of social life. *Communication* is also applied to a particular institution or industry, that of the mass media, the press, the radio, and, to some extent, the popular arts.

In the same vein, Fauconnier (1973) has noted that communication is an attempt at making common, and it constitutes the basic condition for the origin, the existence and the development of every social relationship. It is for this reason that Aristotle took the gift of speech or language as his starting point in his treatment of the state. Thus, communication assumes great importance as a topic of study in a specialised area like development communication.

A review of the history of humankind reveals that no nation or people have been the sole repository of knowledge. Rather, different cultures have generated new ideas, knowledge, etc (Melkote, 1991: 34), which have accumulated over time and diffused from area to area and from people to people. Some nations developed the ability to acquire and apply this knowledge faster than others and they used it to place themselves above others in wealth and power, as well as to control the wealth and overall development of other nations in the world.

The period from the sixteenth century to early twentieth century was one of expansion and exploitation by European merchant classes, which resulted in the subjugation and reduction to serfdom of vast numbers of human beings across the southern two-thirds of the globe now referred as the Third World (Broofield, 1975). The first period of European expansion ended in the early part of the nineteenth century, leading to the decolonisation of the Americas and the suppression of slave trade (Goldthorpe, 1975). Western expansion, however, continued unabated into the interior parts of Africa and Asia. This struggle for independence precipitated an era of ethical concern and led some of the colonial powers to concede some responsibility for the development and not just the exploitation of the subjugated people.

The years following World War II saw the birth of multilateral development assistance through the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the United Nations and the emergence of bilateral development assistance – to help newly independent developing countries of Asia, Africa

and Latin America. Assistance to Third World comprised both monetary help, as well as knowledge of scientific techniques and technologies in health, agriculture, mass media, etc, and human expertise to facilitate the acquisition of the new information. This gave birth to Organised Development Assistance (ODA).

At the superficial level, the task of modernising or developing the Third World appeared quite simple. What had to be done was to determine appropriate innovations promising high payoffs and arrange to have them diffused to targeted beneficiaries. The reasons for the degrading state of affairs in the Third World countries were attributed to the inadequate industrial infrastructure, backward cultures of these nations and peculiar characteristics of their citizens. The long history of colonial exploitation and oppressive social structure was not considered a factor responsible for the state of affairs in these countries.

Thus, the solution to the problems of underdeveloped in Asia, Africa and Latin America was to take development to them as it had been done in European countries. The process of development in the Third World could be speeded up through the different stages at a rate faster than the advanced countries experienced it. This orientation became known as the Dominant Paradigm.

Thus, the dominant paradigm prescribed a unique model for the development or modernisation of the Third World countries – a model that was tested in Western nations and found to be successful. The model of

development emphasised the importance of economic growth through industrialisation, capital intensive and machine intensive technology, a top-down structure of authority with economists in charge, and a certain attitude and mindset among individuals. The mass media performed a special function of exposing individuals to new people, new ideas, and attitudes and consequently accelerated the process of modernisation. Thus, in the research and writing on modernisation, communication was more than just an interplay between the source and receiver. It served as a complex system fulfilling certain social functions (Melkote, 1991). The media, therefore, came to serve as agents and indices of development. Wilbur Schramm (1964) reiterated that the modernisation of industrial or agricultural sectors in developing nations required the mobilisation of human resources. Education and the mass media were vested with the crucial responsibility in the mobilisation of human resources. He noted:

The task of the mass media of information and the 'new media' of education is to speed and ease the long, slow social transformation required for economic development, and in particular, to speed and smooth the task of mobilising human resources behind national effort (Schramm, 1964: 2).

A predominantly one-way flow of communication from government development agencies to the people was implied by the dominant paradigm. And the mass media seemed ideally suited to this role (Rogers, 1976b: 134). This period (1950s and 1960s) was also characterised by a spate of research activity to demonstrate the correlation between exposure to the mass media

and modernisation. Surveys conducted by Frey (1966) in Turkey, Rogers (1965, 1969) in Columbia, Inkeles and Smith (1974), Rogers (1969) survey of peasants in Columbia, India, Nigeria, Kenya and Brazil showed the role of mass media as an intervening variable between literacy and various measures of modernisation.

Thus, the connection between the availability of mass media and national development was crucial. Both Lerner (1958) and Schramm (1964) showed a high correlation between the indices of modernity and availability of mass media outlets. The converse was also true. As Schramm notes: "the less developed countries have less developed mass communication systems also, and less development in the services that support the growth of mass communication" (Schramm, 1964: 112).

In an attempt to reduce the gap between nations labelled as mass media haves and have-nots, UNESCO suggested a minimum standard for mass media availability in the Third World (Schramm, 1964). Since researchers had demonstrated a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between the development of the mass media and important indices in the economic, social and political spheres, the establishment of a minimum of mass media outlets was strongly encouraged if the developing nations were to achieve overall national development.

Thus, information was considered the missing link in the development chain. The quality of information available and its wide dissemination was a key factor in the speed and smoothness of development. Adequate mass

media outlets and information would act as a spur to education, commerce and a chain of other related development activities.

The pioneers in this first phase of development communication were Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm, Lucian Pye, David McClelland, Everett Rogers and Frederick Frey. In the second phase, a more critical approach on the role of the media was adopted. The main theorists here included Rogers, Schiller and Third World scholars such as Freire, Beltran, Tehranian and others. In the third phase, the theoretical debates have taken three distinct new turns. In the first place, theories of information society and information economy have posited a new evolutionary stage in history, dubbed as "post-industrial" (Tehranian, 2001: 274). Secondly, in response to the growing international gaps in income and information, the less developed countries (LDCs) have rallied around UNESCO's MacBride Report (UNESCO, 1980), calling for a new world information and communication order (NWICO) with a dual emphasis on freedom as well as equality cum balance in information flows. In the third place, the critical and neo-Marxist theorists have increasingly turned to theories of post-structuralism and postmodernism to explain the conditions of a media-saturated and information-intensive, post-industrial world (Harvey, 1992).

The significance of communication to the development process is quite obvious. Some may argue that other factors are of much greater importance, for instance, ownership of the means of production; political struggle, the mobilisation of class consciousness; capital growth or technical know-how.

But even so, there is the general consensus that no change can occur without flows of information (Hedebro, 1982).

The expression *information explosion* is often used to describe what we are experiencing, as information flows rapidly increase. This information explosion is not limited to developing countries alone but is also going on in industrialised countries. Newspapers increase daily in number, while radio and television stations multiply and increase their hours of transmission, computer techniques provide great storage capacities and electronic innovations are also expanding daily.

Information dissemination by the mass media and other channels is used for a number of different purposes to convey knowledge of a specific kind, to sell products or to distribute political propaganda.

In the Third World or less developed countries (LDCs), information has come to occupy a central place in the development process, that is, in efforts to improve living conditions, increase participation, achieve self-reliance, promote equity and empowerment. The systematic study of information dissemination in developing nations can be said to have started in the 1950s with Daniel Lerner's book, *The Passing of Traditional Society*. Since then, questions about the role of information dissemination by the media has come to occupy a central place in development studies.

Among the questions studied most extensively are:

What extent and how can the mass media contribute to national and local development?
How can the media and personal contacts be used to persuade large groups in a village, region

or an entire country to adopt new ideas?"
(Hedebro, 1982: 4)

It is therefore not difficult to understand why communication has been given great attention in nations where socio-economic improvements are necessary. This concerns also industrialised countries, for example, in Sweden, both the public and private sectors have increased their communication activities (Hedebro, 1982). The reason behind this is that the dissemination of information is an important means by which to influence and control society.

Our study focuses on the role of the press in the development of Nigeria in terms of whom the press empowers in democratic governance. Thus, the politics and functions of the mass media in a general sense are the primary objects of this study, as well as problems concerning the organisational structure, ownership and control of the media. The term *communication policy* is often used as a general concept for this type of study.

1.2 THE PRESS AND THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AT INDEPENDENCE

A necessary starting point in the analysis of the press in Nigeria's post-independence political process must begin with an examination of the nature of the relationship between the press and the political system. This is particularly essential if the press is regarded as an integral part of the larger, social, economic and political environment. If so regarded, the press is better understood both in terms of their structural features and operating

environment, particularly as the latter cannot but have a determining influence on its behaviour (M.J.W. Riley, Jr. M.W. Riley, 1965: 563-568).

What follows is a discussion of the structure of the press and its relationship with the political system (political parties and government) – with a view to serving as a background against which press behaviour will be understood and analysed.

As mentioned elsewhere, the Nigerian society is characterised by ethnic and regional differences. At independence, these differences were politically significant and found parallel expressions in the formal political organisations and governmental structures at the regional and federal levels. Similarly, these differences were reflected in the structural organisation of the press during the period under study. These were basically reflected in the nature of newspaper ownership, which represented the primary link between the press and the political system.

Newspaper proprietorship by political parties constituted the dominant pattern of newspaper ownership at independence. This structure of newspaper ownership emerged during the nationalist period when the newspaper became an indispensable adjunct to the activities of the emergent ethno-political parties. The rift in, and the subsequent collapse of, the nationalist front under the strain of bitter inter-ethnic struggles for political power and control of the expectant new state profoundly influenced this development.

The offshoot of this development was the establishment and/or conversion of existing private newspaper concerns into formidable organs of political parties. In the process, the press subsequently became regionalised under the ownership and effective control of the major political parties. This dependent relationship ultimately transformed these newspapers into exponents of ethnic opinions and guardians of their patrons' ethno-regional interests. They also served as barometers of inter-ethnic relationships and an important medium of the inter-party and inter-governmental political communication (S.O. Bamiduro, 1982: 116).

In all, there were four basic types of newspaper ownership, with different structures of management and control. These were overseas commercial, overseas commercial/political party, government and political party (Marcia A. Grant, 1971: 95-114). The *Daily Express* represented the overseas commercial/political party type. It was jointly owned and controlled by an overseas private commercial concern, the Roy Thompson International Limited and the Action Group (AG). The latter's interest in the venture was represented by the National Investments and Properties Company (NIPC), which was a financial front of the AG (Federation of Nigeria: Report of the Coker Commission, 1962: 31-32).

A government-owned variant was owned and controlled by a government, which in this respect was either regional or federal and controlled by one political party or a coalition of political parties. *The Nigerian Outlook*, the *Nigerian Citizen* and the *Morning Post* notably represented this type. The

Outlook was owned by the NCNC (National Council of Nigeria and the Camerouns) – controlled Eastern regional government and managed through a bureaucratic agency, the Eastern Nigeria Information Service (Increase Coker, 1968: 82).

The *Nigerian Citizen* was owned by the NPC (Northern Peoples Congress) controlled Northern Nigerian government and managed through the instrumentality of an NPC-controlled statutory corporation, the Gaskiya Corporation. The NPC/NCNC federal coalition government controlled the federally-owned *Morning Post* and its management was effected through a federal statutory corporation, the Nigerian National Press Limited, under a board of directors (Frank Barton, 1979: 29-41).

The *West African Pilot* represented a political type. Though privately owned by the late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, the paper was closely associated with, and enjoyed financial support from, the NCNC and its regional government. Furthermore, the paper was consistently supportive of the NCNC and the government when Dr. Azikiwe headed it. A similar fraternal relationship existed between the paper and Dr. Michael Okpara who succeeded Azikiwe as the NCNC national president and premier of Eastern Nigeria. Above all, the paper steadfastly supported the NCNC on all national issues of importance to the Eastern region and defended Igbo ethnic interests.

1.3 THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE IN PERSPECTIVE

The profile of the press in Nigeria is perhaps sufficient to tell the history of the entire country since independence. The Nigerian press has at every epoch attempted to live up to its responsibilities as the "Fourth Estate of the Realm". Indeed, when Nigeria joined the league of sovereign states in 1960, one of the key instruments that were given praise for its role towards independence was the Nigerian press.

Before independence, the press was the instrument both of attack and of defence for the forces of nationalism which eventually secured political independence from the British Government. According to William Hachten (1971), to study either nationalism or the press in British West Africa is to study the other. The press, he contends, gave to nationalism its prime means of diffusion, the medium through which its ideas could be disseminated. In the same way, nationalism gave to the press its principal message in extending its circulation; separation of the two, Hachten and other scholars rightly maintain, is not feasible.

Consequently, nationalists had garnered considerable support for the Nigerian press. In the mid-1930s, for example, there were many cases of suppressed grievances by the colonialists. Thus, people were in search of a vehicle of communication, which would be radical in content and also be bold to publish and be damned. When the late Nnamdi Azikiwe (or Zik, as he was popularly known) hit the news stands with the West African Pilot – an English language newspaper, with a conglomeration of other well established newspapers – he had not only created for his co-nationalist fighters the

leeway to achieving Nigeria's independence, but also for the generality of Nigerians still groaning under the unwanted rule of Britain, some form of relief.

In the same vein, the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo wrote of Zik and his struggle:

As there was no effective vehicle for the vigorous ventilation of suppressed grievances, a journalistic vacuum was thus created which Azikiwe very cleverly exploited and usefully filled when he returned to the country in 1937, to establish the West African Pilot, which was a 'fire-spitting' and aggressive nationalist paper of the highest order" (quoted in Dan Agbese, "Vox Populi", *Newswatch*, April 3, 1989: 13).

Today (2002 AD), over forty years since this speech was made and four decades after Nigerian independence, the press is still very much in the vanguard for uplifting the socio-political, economic and religious lives of our people. The 'advocacy' role of a segment of the press, known as the "radical press", is a more lucid attestation to the efficacy of the press in combating the problems of our time. It is, therefore, no wonder that this segment of the press has today continuously been perched on the altar of being pole-axed, just like what obtained in the formative years of the independence struggle (Umerri, 1991: 5).

In largely democratic nations like the United States of America (USA), Britain, etc, the indelible footprints of the media are perceived not only as a necessity, but also a means of creating the much sought after society they thirst for. Again, the effectiveness and success of government in these societies can be partially traced to the media.

Thus, the indispensable position of the press as the fourth estate of the realm imposes responsibilities, mainly the complex but enviable and sacred duty of surveillance of the environment by monitoring the process of governance. The media thus become the crucial link between the government and the governed, criticising, investigating and analysing events, informing people and protecting their right to know. And it is precisely this role of the media as that crucial link that creates suspicions between the government and the media. On the one hand, a certain tension separates them, and on the other, undeniable ties bind them. Media scholars have pointed out that antagonism between government (or politicians) and the press (or journalists) is as old as the press itself and, if anything, it can only intensify. The purpose and duties of the "two powers" are constantly separate and sometimes diametrically opposite. The first duty of the press is to obtain the earliest and most correct intelligence of the time by instantly disclosing them and making them the common property of the nation. Whereas the press lives by disclosures, the government's duty is often times the reverse. The politician or statesman cautiously guards from the public eye the information by which his actions and opinions are regulated. The duty of the one is to speak, and of the other, is to be silent (Whale, 1977: 114).

Indeed, a government might, in many circumstances, govern the better and more acceptably, by speaking out. It would then look for guidance and support from understanding voters. But the instinct to governmental secrecy

is old and deep. Often times, there is national value in it. However, secrecy generally serves narrow purposes.

Apart from dragging facts into the open, the press may also bring forward unwelcome arguments. Politicians, dependent on voters' favour, hope that public comments on their plans and deeds will be favourable. Nonetheless, news people, writing opinion pieces about these decisions, are not concerned with that. They may have blind spots of their own; but their profession demands their championing the cause of objective wisdom. Thus, if they conclude that the government is on the right track; they have to balance their viewpoints by giving the other side of the argument.

It would be wrong to represent the media and government as adversaries and nothing else. At least, they are adversaries who depend on one another. Government needs the media in order to have its deeds and expectations publicly known. On the other hand, the media, anxious to make the world more interesting and comprehensible, are constantly seeking information from the government machine. Thus, government in all its branches, is a principal theme of the news media and its greatest single source of information; and the business of democratic government would be impossible without newspapers and broadcasting stations to expound it.

It is important to also note that the press in Nigeria is far from being characterised as monolithic and unified. As pointed out earlier, the Nigerian press is highly sectarian – with different sentiments lending their support to the owners. The government provides the framework of law, without which

the media could not operate. The government also claims the loyalty of individual journalists as citizens of their nation. Government may want to divert the media into different preoccupations, but the mutual dependence is there. And it is this interdependence, among other critical issues, that this study sets out to unravel.

1.4 DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION OF BASIC CONCEPTS

In this section, key concepts as used in this study are not only defined but also discussed.

1.4.1 The Press

The term press, as used here, refers not only to newspapers, magazines, and also the mass media of communication. One of its principal goals is the dissemination of information. The press has also been defined as "a fundamental organ of news collation, sprouting and dissemination that strives to recreate society" (Umerri, 1991: 8). Media scholars and commentators alike agree that "the intellectual communication of a refined society is stored in its mass media" (Yusuf, B. 1991: 60). The press and electronic media, more than any other organ of communication, have the widest reach, influence the largest number and thus bring the shrinking world into one global village. Together, these media hold the world hostage by informing, educating, entertaining, and initiating policies. The all-pervading influence of the media cannot be defied even in dictatorial and closed

societies, because the dictator will need the media to communicate his orders to his subdued audience.

In a democratic polity, the press assumes even greater roles, serving as the barometer of public opinion, the vital link between initiators, implementers and the consumers of policies. So indispensable is the press that life without it can only be imagined. But then, one of our concerns in this study is who are the principal actors in this exchange?

1.4.2 Communication and Information

Communication has been defined as a situation where messages flow between institutions, people and media, with or without feedback. Whereas "information" is used mainly to denote the contents of a message (Hedebrö, 1982: 5). This means that through communication, individuals and institutions exchange meaning through a common system of symbols. Communication is therefore social interaction through messages. Fiske (1982) writes that all communication involves signs and codes that are transmitted and made available to others, and that transmitting and receiving signs and codes is the practice of social relationships. Signs are 'artefacts or acts that refer to something other than themselves; that is, they are signifying constructs (Fiske, 1982: 2). Codes, on the other hand, are a system into which signs are organised in a text. Fiske further contends that communication is central to the life of any culture, and without it, culture would die. The study of

communication, therefore, involves the study of the culture of which it is an integral part.

A distinction is made between mass and interpersonal communication. In communication, a message is sent to a receiver, who may or may not respond. In mass communication, the channel through which the message is conveyed involves a mechanism that reaches a wide and often non-contiguous audience. Newspapers, radio, television, film and magazines are all mass media channels able to transmit messages to large and widely dispersed audiences. In these media, there tends to be a one-way flow of information. Hedebro notes the following characteristics of the mass media:

- Directed in one way with little or no possibility for the receivers to respond to the senders/media.
- Interpersonal: the messages are explicitly formulated to suit a mass of people, not a single one.
- Simultaneous: a large number of people receive a message at the same time.
- Public (Hedebro, 1982: 4).

In mass communication, the initiative and the ability to transmit messages lies mostly with the sender, whereas in interpersonal communication, the individual through whom the message is flowing is the channel. A situation where the audiences are not merely recipients and consumers of messages, but can initiate, create and transmit messages to one another is sometimes referred to as participatory communication. This

happens in an interpersonal communication situation, although there is currently a movement to adapt some of the mass media into participatory communication channels.

1.4.3 Feedback

Feedback is regarded as the regenerative circuit of communication. It is generally conceived as the return message transmitted from receiver to sender. It is the response of the receiver to the sender's original message. The distinction between one-way and two-way communication is that the former lacks feedback.

Central to the purpose of feedback is control; that is feedback enables the communicator to adjust his/her message, or response to that of the sender, and to the context in which the communicative activity takes place. At the interpersonal level, feedback is transmitted by voice, expression, gesture, sight, hearing, touch, smell etc. Often, the greater the distance between communicators, the fewer the 'senses' being employed to 'read' and return feedback, the more difficult it is to assess its nature and meaning (Watson and Hill, 1984: 71).

1.4.4 Development

Development is usually defined as both a process and a goal in bringing about social change that will improve the living standards of the people. Nonetheless, there is no accepted interpretation of what social change means, nor is there a generally accepted standard to measure improved living standards. However, for most governments in Africa,

development means economic growth and technological advancement. The emphasis is on increased economic productivity, and the Gross National Product (Mda, 1993). As has been extensively documented, this is an inaccurate indicator because it does not take into account the distribution of economic growth within the country. Peasants may increase productivity, and therefore raise the GNP and the per capita income in the country, while they continue to be impoverished and the national elite get wealthier.

Commenting on this phenomenon, which views the western road to social change, explicitly or implicitly as synonymous with development, Hedebro writes:

The road to being a highly developed nation goes through free enterprise and private ownership, and the stress is on rapid economic growth via industrialisation and urbanisation. Very little is said, however, about the distribution of economic growth. The notion is that all citizens will benefit through some trickle-down mechanism. Exactly how this is going to happen is not made clear, however (Hedebro, 1982: 19).

Ake has also commented on the confusion of development with economic growth, and the "indifference to the causes of economic backwardness which are rooted in the integration of their (African) economy into the Western capitalist system (Ake, 1981: 143). It is apparent that the Western notion of development prevails in Africa today and for many African leaders, the quest for development has become the same thing as wanting to be like the West.

Thus, Africa is faced with a situation where citizens aspire to lifestyles typical of the Western middle class, and this promotes consumerism, a situation which perpetuates the dependency of African nations upon the West.

The notion of technological advancement also perpetuates dependency because all advanced technology in Africa is imported from the developed world - mainly the West. Transfer of technology does not break the bonds of underdevelopment in the village, where the vast majority of the population in all African countries lives, but also reinforces and promotes skewed development characterised by a distribution of wealth that favours the elite at the expense of the rural poor.

The need for an alternative perspective of development has been recognised by Mda:

We discovered that development should indeed be a process of social transformation. However, many cases of social change in the developing world, and in the industrialised world as well, do not lead to a better quality of life. Social change could also be anti-development. We therefore searched for an alternative perspective of development and settled for a definition which stressed that through development, a society should achieve a greater control of its social, economic and political destiny. This means that the individual members of the community should have increased control of their institutions (Mda, 1993: 40).

Inayatullah (1967) has rightly stressed the need for a perspective that reflects the search for ways of life where the goals are not simply to catch up

with cultures that measure standards of living along a few dimensions only. In this perspective, the transfer of products, ideas and technology from the West to developing or Third World countries cannot be considered equivalent to legitimate development. The perspective contends that development must imply liberation - a freeing from all forms of domination, from dependence and oppression.

Thus, Africa, and Nigeria in this case, should learn to view development in a broader sense that embraces a process of liberation, because in spite of political independence, dependency relations still exist not only with the former colonial powers but also with the developed world in general. The emphasis should be at least on the following three dimensions, namely, self-reliance and empowerment, participation and equity in distribution of development benefits. This perspective has shaped our study.

Another scholar who sees development as a process of liberation also writes:

Developmental progress cannot be measured with but one or a few indicators, such as GNP, GNP/capita or degree of industrialisation. Rather, development in this perspective implies a process whereby the overall personalities of the people of the Third World are rehabilitated and strengthened after years of dehumanisation. It is just as much a development of humankind as it is a development of material living conditions (Hedebrö, 1982: 103).

1.4.5 Developing Countries

The term *developing countries* can be misleading in several respects. In the first place, there is no country that is wholly developed or underdeveloped. In most countries of the world, there are sectors of the society that are highly developed and where people do not suffer from what is commonly referred to as symptoms of underdevelopment, that is poverty, malnutrition, chronic diseases, unemployment, low income per capita and a low level of literacy. An example often cited is the United States of America, generally considered the most developed nation, where some groups still live under conditions that can be described as underdeveloped.

The terms *underdevelopment* or *underdeveloped* should, therefore, be applied within countries to classes and groups in that or in the whole world (Hedebro, 1982). However, since the term is frequently used in debates about social change problems in Asia, Africa and Latin America, it is still necessary to use it, but only when referring to countries where a majority of the population lives under strained conditions of the kind described above (Hedebro, 1982: 10).

This study uses the expressions *developing*, *underdeveloped*, *less developed* and *Third World* as synonyms, although there are great differences among them, if they are analysed closely.

The poorest countries refers to nations that suffer extreme symptoms of underdevelopment. However, countries are not classified as *poor* in most

cases because they lack natural resources, but because they have become involved in a dependency situation. And because of this dependency relationship, these countries have not been able to use their natural resources for national development.

Another objection to the use of these terminologies is that there is an inherent danger in lumping together countries with different historical backgrounds, different geographical conditions, different sizes of population and so on.

No doubt, the problems developing countries face are similar, but the differences among them are so wide that great care must be taken in suggesting ways to improve their standards of living.

1.4.6 Development Communication

Development communication is the utilisation of the media, both mass and interpersonal, to initiate and advance the process of development. This study, like similar ones in the area (Mda, 1993: 4), takes the position that in the Third World, and Nigeria in particular, this process should involve not merely the transmission of messages on development issues, such as the adoption of better agricultural methods, rural sanitation and primary health care to the largest audiences - rather, the process should also empower the disadvantaged to have a greater control of their social, political and economic institutions. This, in turn, will lead to their liberation from all forms of political

domination and economic dependency. Development communication, therefore, becomes a political action.

1.4.7 Message

Message is broadly conceived as any form of decoded or interpreted information. A message draws its initial shape and purpose from the sender or communicator. According to Watson and Hill (1984), messages are influenced by the nature of the medium in which the message is sent - by language and gesture, in the case of radio, by the fact that it is exclusively an aural channel; in television, both visual and aural. They further state that the meaningfulness of a message depends (at a basic, instrumental level), on the weight it carries in competition with other messages. A message depends upon the significance attached to it by receivers.

Messages derive meaning from their context, and a crucial part of that context is how other people view and regard the same messages and how our perceptions of those messages are mediated by others (Watson and Hill, 1984: 105).

1.4.8 What is Democracy?

Democracy, from which we have the adjective democratic governance, is distinct concept and it is important to understand it.

The term democracy is perhaps one of the most polemical words in the political dictionary. It has become subjected to so many interpretations and adaptations in different parts of the world that over time, it has become value-

ridden. In the context of globalisation of the world, the impression is often given that democracy is good; and to be undemocratic is bad. The Greek, originators of the concept, must be very confused about it today, given the problems of democracy in Greece in the recent past (Elaigwu, 2002: 13).

For the purposes of this study, we shall identify some of the salient characteristics of democracy. Among these characteristics is the locus of authority in a democratic polity. Authority emanates from the people. Any authority that does not emerge from the consent of the people is not democratic. How consent is operationalized may vary from one system to the other. As the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, Section 14(2a) puts it:

Sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government through this constitution derives all its power and authority.

As Elaigwu (2002) has rightly observed, the people are the repository of power. They mandate their representatives to carry out certain functions on their behalf. That power given to the people's representatives to carry out certain functions on their behalf is authority – which is legitimate power.

Secondly, a democratic polity must be based on the rule of law. Law cannot be arbitrary in a democracy. There are specified limits to power and how power can be used. In addition, there should be an acceptance of the “rules of the game” of politics by all the players, if arbitrariness is not to come in at a later stage. The rule of law provides for predictability of actions and reactions in the system. It also provides avenues for the aggrieved to seek redress without taking the law into his hands. No one is above the law –

neither the lawmakers nor the masses, the leaders or the followers. Where law begins to identify sacred cows in its implementation, the efficacy of the rule of law gets eroded.

A third characteristic of a democratic polity is legitimacy. Legitimacy involves two processes. On the input side, it means that the leader has the right to rule – that is to say that, given the law or rules for accession to power, he is the right person to be there (*Newswatch*, February 18, 2002: 14). The institutional mechanism for this accession to power would depend on the particular country and people. While some countries may opt for plebiscitarian modes, others may have indirect representation, or any other mechanism. On the output side, it means that he is performing well, given the ends for which he has been elected or chosen. In this instance, the Nigerian constitution specifically states the main functions of government in Section 14(2b):

The security and welfare of the people shall be
the primary purpose of government.

It is therefore possible that a leader may have the right to rule because he had been properly elected and yet lose his legitimacy because he did not “rule rightly” as perceived by his people.

Similarly, a leader may have no right to rule if he violates the conditions for his/her election or selection, as clearly specified by the constitution and the enabling laws. In other words, the rigging of elections can also lead to the loss of legitimacy.

Fourthly, central to a democratic polity is the element of choice. The people should have the right to effect changes in the leadership or government of their country, given available alternate leadership. In some countries, the plebiscitarian system is used, while in others, other mechanisms for providing choices are used. This choice includes all basic human freedoms – freedom of thought, movement, association, worship and others. Also subsumed under this are the freedoms of expression of the individual and the accompanying freedoms of the press.

Fifthly, there must be accountability. Leaders must be held responsible for their actions as representatives of the people who are trusted with power to achieve particular goals. They must account for the mandate entrusted to them.

Thus, accountability refers to the ability of a functionary to give satisfactory explanations for actions taken. If sovereignty resides with the people, the government should be responsible and accountable to the people. Accountability, therefore, goes beyond the use or misuse of public funds. The actions of leaders should be subject to constant analytic x-ray. After all, a constitution merely provides for a “basis of expression of harmony and a foundation of conduct” (Elaigwu, 2002: 19). It accepts that discipline is important and that necessary limitations on incumbents are essential. Thus, in the Nigerian constitution, there are many provisions which are aimed at making public officers responsive to the public pulse, disciplined in their

activities and dedicated to the service of the people, not as masters, but as servants.

Closely related to the principle of accountability is transparency. Transparency basically refers to the ability to see clearly through objects, for instance, seeing clearly through a drinking glass to ensure that it is clean enough to be used. Transparency refers to our ability to exhibit clearness in action, which puts such actions above question. A transparent process or system is one that has nothing to hide – “no skeletons in a cupboard” – it is one that is easily understood, is open, very clear and easily recognised. It is therefore important for us to ask if the Nigerian democracy and governance has been transparent. Has the press itself been transparent in its motives and actions? These are important considerations in this study.

The principles of accountability and transparency are enshrined in democratic governance in a way that is not possible in military regimes (*Newswatch*, February 18, 2002). An elected government in a democratic polity is expected to be accountable for its actions to the people and one way of ensuring this is through periodic elections, during which alternative policies compete for acceptance, and incumbent governments have to justify why they should be back in government. Similarly, a democratic polity emphasises the importance of transparency in government business. The people are entitled to know the nature and operation of government. They should have access to government organs and feed inputs into essential decisions which affect their lives. As stated in the 1999 Constitution, Section 14(2c), “the

participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this constitution.” An important consideration here is, therefore, how the government and the press or media have ensured the participation of Nigerians in governance. How are the provisions in that constitution being enforced?

In essence, participation is the heart of democracy; since power rests with the people who delegate such powers to representatives to carry out specified functions on their behalf; such representatives have the responsibility to account for their service. Similarly, transparency has been identified as a livewire of democracy. Its purity and cleanliness gives life to the heart and the democratic body. It embellishes the functioning of the polity and reinforces legitimacy of representatives or political leaders (Elaigwu, 2002: 19). Thus, democracy demands a high level of participation, accountability and transparency in order for the system to operate smoothly ensuring good governance and political stability and the security and welfare of its citizens. The press in this system should assume the important function of serving as that vital, that watchdog and the searchlight that investigates to ensure performance – thus generating participation in order to instigate empowerment.

1.4.9 Democratic Governance

The concept of governance is not new. It has been present in both political and academic discourse for a long time. Accompanying the

democratic tide which engulfed the African continent from the late 1980s into the 1990s is the concept of democratic governance. It has become such a powerful and persuasive discourse which has forced 'die-hard' dictators (of military and one-party state genres) to succumb to the demand for multi-party and competitive politics (Gana, 1991: 1).

It is also important for us to distinguish between government and governance, even though both words are used interchangeably in this study. Government "is generally viewed as a process within a group of individuals for making and enforcing decisions that affect their behaviour and regulate the use of resources in their given community" (Ikpi, 1996: 19). The decisions so made may be conscious and deliberate (as in the case of drafting constitutions), or unconscious (as a result of habit, tradition or custom). But by whichever way they are made, such decisions lead to the establishment of a power structure that controls behaviour by making and enforcing rules and regulations. On the other hand, governance "is the total ability to organise, synthesise and direct the various actions of the working parts of a government machinery in order for such a government to perform meaningfully, creditably and acceptably. Thus, government involves both the governing class and the governed people; and good governance must of necessity be democratic, entail popular participation by the people, be accountable and ensure basic freedom" (Ikpi, 1999: 19).

Hyden (1993) has identified the following three elements in the concept of governance:

- (a) How social and economic resources are managed to provide goods and services for development.
- (b) How power is exercised to determine and implement the task of governance.
- (c) The human resources available to exercise authority and manage national resources.

It is important to point out that instrumental to the success of democratic governance is the building of civil institutions, viable political parties which openly function and a free dynamic press which would curb corruption and clientelism, thus making both the private sector and government accountable for their conduct. A free press would not only induce a new sense of responsibility but also provide a forum for public debate and thus generate new and creative proposals and policy options.

A strong sense implied in the concept of democratic governance therefore is that it is a prerequisite for sustainable development. While this does not present democracy and democratisation as constituting an end per se, it is admitted to be the most viable framework for addressing the task of development in the interest of the people. The notion of sustainable development itself suggests that the people themselves through their organisations should be involved in initiating, planning and executing development as dictated by their priorities and informed by the realities of their daily struggle for survival. Thus, correctly understood, democratic

governance provides a strong inter-connection and linkage between the state, civil society and the individual.

1.4.10 Regime Type

The type of political system prevalent in a country can facilitate or hinder the implementation of the good governance agenda and consequently development. There are many regime types – ranging from multi-party democracies at one extreme to military/dictatorial regimes at the other extreme. In between are regimes which are variations of the two extremes (Yahaya, 1998: 3).

There is a strong global opinion that multi-party democracy is superior to any regime type in guaranteeing freedom of the press, human rights and better economic management, also in providing national security, fostering economic prosperity and in ensuring the adoption of good policies for national development.

In Nigeria, the global movement for democratisation is not the only motivating force for the popular demand for democratic governance. The political and economic deficits of many years of military rule forced Nigerians to demand the 1999 replacement (through elections) of military rule by a plural democratic system.

1.4.11 Empowerment

Since the mid-1980s, the term empowerment has become popular in the field of development, especially in reference to women. In grassroots programmes and policy debates alike, empowerment has virtually replaced terms such as welfare, uplifting, community participation and poverty alleviation to describe the goal of development and intervention (Srilatha Batliwala, 1994: 127).

In spite of the prevalence of the term, however, many people are confused as to what empowerment implies in political, social and economic terms. Nonetheless, many large-scale programmes are being launched with the explicit objective of 'empowering' the poor or disadvantaged, and 'empowering' women. Empowerment is held to be a panacea for social ills like environmental degradation, high population growth rates and the low status of women, among other ills.

The attention given here to empowerment is based on the premise that it is an enabling condition for political participation. The most conspicuous feature of the term empowerment is that it contains the word power – which may be broadly defined as "control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology" (Gita Sen *et al*, ed., 1994: 129). The material assets over which control can be exercised may be physical, human or financial, such as land, water, forests, people's bodies and labour, money and access to money. Intellectual resources include knowledge, information and ideas. Control over ideology signifies the ability to generate, propagate, sustain and

institutionalise specific sets of beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour virtually determining how people perceive and function within given socio-economic and political environment.

Power, therefore, accrues to those who control or are able to influence the distribution of material resources, knowledge and the ideology that governs social relations in both public and private life (Batliwala, 1994: 129). The extent of power held by particular individuals or groups corresponds to the number or kinds of resources they can control, and the extent to which they can shape prevailing ideologies, whether political, social or religious. This control, in turn, confers the power of decision-making.

Thus, the process of challenging existing power relations, and of gaining greater control over the sources of power, may be termed empowerment. This broad definition is refined by different scholars and activists within the context of their own experience. For instance, according to Sharma ((1991) :

The term empowerment refers to a range of activities from individual self-assertion to collective resistance, protest and mobilisation that challenge basic power relations. For individuals and groups where class, caste, ethnicity and gender determine their access to resources and power, their empowerment begins when they not only recognise the systemic forces that oppress them, but act to change existing power relationships. Empowerment, therefore, is a process aimed at changing the nature and direction of systemic forces which marginalise disadvantaged sections in a given context (Sharma, 1991: 92).

Empowerment is therefore both a process and the result of that process and is manifested as a redistribution of power, whether between nations, classes, castes, races, genders or individuals. The process of empowerment must therefore address all relevant structures and sources of power.

Through empowerment, the disadvantaged people gain access to new worlds of knowledge and can begin to make new informed choices in both their personal and their public lives. However, such changes are not sustainable if limited to a few people. Society is forced to change only when large numbers of people are mobilised to press for change. The empowerment process must organise people into collectives, breaking out from individual isolation and creating a united forum through which the disadvantaged can challenge their subordination.

The process of empowerment is thus a spiral, planning consciousness, identifying areas to target for change, planning strategies, acting for change and analysing action and outcomes, which lead in turn to higher levels of consciousness. The empowerment spiral affects everyone involved – the individual, the activist agent, the collective and the community. This empowerment cannot be a top-down or one-way process. And it is precisely this fact that makes political empowerment relevant in our study of the press and democratic governance since political empowerment is the desired goal. Closely related to empowerment is participation and conscientisation.

1.4.12 Participation

Majid Tehranian (1992: 116), while writing on participation, rightly notes that:

“Modern jargon uses stereotype words like Lego pieces, the words fit arbitrarily together and support the most fanciful constructions. They have no content, but do serve a function. As these words are separate from any context, they are ideal for manipulative purposes. ‘Participation’ and ‘empowerment’ belong to this category of words.”

In a sense, participation could be transitive or intransitive; moral, amoral or immoral; forced or free; manipulative or spontaneous.

According to Rahnema (1992), transitive forms of participation are by definition oriented towards a specific goal or target. By contrast, in its intransitive forms, the subject lives the partaking process without any predefined purpose. For instance, while one is listening, loving, creating or fully living one’s life, one partakes without necessarily seeking the ethically defined nature of the goals or its purposes. It is generally associated with moral or desirable goals and, as such, given a positive connotation. It seldom comes to mind that the act of partaking may apply to evil or malicious purposes. From a third perspective, and perhaps with the same positive connotations generally associated with the word, participation tends to be perceived as a free exercise. This perception neither conforms to the meaning of the word, nor the way in which it is translated into practice. For, more often than not, people are asked or dragged into partaking in operations that are of no interest to them, in the very name of participation. Neither the pyramids nor the many contemporary mass demonstrations in favour of

repressive undemocratic regimes have represented free acts of participation by the people.

This leads us to distinguish between manipulated or teleguided forms of participation and spontaneous ones. In the former, the participants do not feel they are being forced into doing something, but are actually led to take actions which are inspired or directed by centres outside their control.

Considering these various forms of participation, it is not surprising that some scholars state that all societies, in particular traditional ones, are participant. This fact is, however, challenged by other scholars like Daniel Lerner, a spokesman of the development ideology, who argues that "traditional society is non-participant", while "modern society is" (Lerner, 1958: 50). However, the following addition to the Lerner's position is more explanatory: "A nation's level of political participation co-varies with its level of economic development" (Norman, H. N., 1969 369).

The words *participation* and *participatory* appeared for the first time in the development jargon during the late 1950s. The social activist and field workers who had joined the development bandwagon in the hope that they could help the oppressed "unfold, like a flower from a bud"; had come up against a reality which was totally different from their earlier expectations. This led them to attribute some of the failures of development projects to the fact that the populations concerned were kept out of the processes related to their design, formulation and implementation. Many of them consequently started to advocate an end of 'top-down' strategies of action and the inclusion of

participation and participatory methods of interaction as an essential dimension of development.

Popular participation, on the other hand, has been defined as “the organised efforts to increase control over resources and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control” (Mathias Stiefel and Marshall Wolfe, 1984: 12). “The central issue of popular participation has to do with power, exercised by some people over the people, and by some classes over other classes...” For Orlando Fals-Borda and other Participatory Action Research (PAR) theorists, the aim of such participation is to achieve power:

A special kind of power – people’s power – which belongs to the oppressed and exploited classes and groups and their organisations, and the defence of their just interests to enable them to advance towards shared goals of social change within a participatory system (Orlando Fals-Borda, 1988: 2).

It is important for us to understand the concept of participation, because this study is concerned with the political function of participation and in particular how participation empowers the voiceless and the powerless and also eventually how it creates a bridge between the government and its citizens.

1.4.13 Conscientisation

Conscientisation is related to participation. Participation becomes almost inevitable once people are conscientised. But first, what is meant by this catchword conscientisation? Paulo Freire, an early advocate of this concept, has explained it in his theory of ‘historical conditioning and levels of

consciousnesses (see Paulo Freire, 1975: 57-71). According to Freire, in dependent societies and during transitional phases, the oppressed do not yet have a “critical consciousness”, but rather a “semi-transitive” or “naïve transitive” or “popular” consciousness. This “historical” cultural reality leads them to “internalise the values of the dominant groups”, and to have a distorted perception of their own condition. Hence, the need for progressive groups to transcend their class interest and engage in conscientisation exercises – raising people’s awareness about the reality of their conditions and how they can overcome them.

1.5 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

It is important for us to understand that press and government relationships in Africa generally, and Nigeria in particular, are to a large extent a manifestation of the legacy left by the colonial administrators and governments. Malinowski (1963) observed that the whole range of European influences, interests, good intentions and predatory drives must become an essential part of the study of African development and cultural change. African leaders and scholars alike tend to ignore the fact that the continent was ever under European domination. Yet, one cannot take this stance if one is interested in understanding the nature and problems of the contemporary Nigerian press. For example, it has been correctly summarised that the genesis of Nigerian journalism lay in the publications of colonial governments and missionaries. In the colonialists’ mind, the essential

European press was a good media for furthering African acculturation to European models in style, dress, speech and social norms. During this period, the key structure in the socialisation process was the schools and media of communication which were concerned in various ways with rationalising, perpetuating and fostering loyalty or conformity to the colonial regime (Coleman, 1963: 70).

Thus, part of the problem is that the Nigerian press has always operated in an authoritarian climate, both in the colonial and post-independence era. The various authoritarian governments in Nigeria have created an uncondusive atmosphere for the press. Crude and primitive censorship has been placed on the press. In most cases, the press and its practitioners are placed between two evils – to commit professional suicide or accept punishment (Enahoro, 1997: 24).

Thus, the subject of this study may be said to be defined by a problem within a problem. The first involves the nature of the political communication process and this implies the second problem – the means by which a political system functions and sustains its own existence. Does analysis of the nature of the press lead to the conclusion that it provides the necessary linkages between individuals and groups at all levels of society? Have the media contributed to conscientisation, popular participation and empowerment of the average Nigerian? In other words, does the political role of the press entail an exchange of information and response between leaders and the led? Why hasn't the Nigerian press been able to contribute more positively to

democratic governance by challenging government through in-depth and investigative reports – and advocating transparency and accountability in government? What are the inhibiting structures that stand in the way of the press in having more impact? Is it the state or government, owners of the media or economic interests of the media? Or does the analysis lead to the conclusion that the press services the dominant interests within society rather than empowering the ordinary citizen by creating the necessary conditions for participation by all?

Democracy is about people and a way of life. It creates instruments and enabling environment for people's participation. People's participation enables them to achieve empowerment and once empowered, they can engage in the business of democratic governance. Thus, the press is critical to the institution of democracy as a way of life, generating participation in order to instigate empowerment and provide a platform for people to practise good governance.

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Our research objectives are derived directly from the issues discussed above under the research problem. They also seek to answer other questions raised subsequently.

This study sets out to analyse and critique how the press has created an enabling environment for genuine participation in Nigeria from 1999 – 2002.

To achieve this general objective, the study has the following specific objectives:

- (i) Examine the role of the press in promoting some identified developmental goals.
- (ii) Identify and critique the nature and form of communication in the Nigerian media.
- (iii) Discuss the kind of empowerment and participation, which the press engenders.
- (iv) Discuss the beneficiaries of development engendered by the Nigerian press.
- (v) Make recommendations that will enhance better media performance in the promotion of empowerment and participation in the press by the Nigerian people.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is a contribution to previous and ongoing research on the impact of communication in society. The study also provides an opportunity to examine issues on the role of the press in development on the one hand, and issues pertaining to the press as part of a consciousness industry, because consciousness, both individual and social, has become a political issue. Indeed, it is only from the moment when a conviction arises in people's minds that everyone can have a say in his/her own destiny as well as in that of society. The higher the level of consciousness the more likely participation

will take place. It is within this context that one can appreciate the significance of this study.

This study therefore attempts to accomplish what previous studies failed to do. Previous studies in this field have tended to accept the role and functions of the press in the development process uncritically; hence the study critiques traditional roles and functions, highlighting the relationship between the press, conscientisation, participation, empowerment and democratic governance. A critique of previous works enables researchers to improve on available techniques or methods, and prevents people from being misled. This significance is discussed further in the form of its theoretical contribution, methodological importance and the practical alternatives for utilisation of the press in increasing the number of beneficiaries that are empowered for effective governance and development.

In the area of theoretical contribution, there is no universally accepted theory of the press. Yet, new insights are gained on the data on the Nigerian press and development communication. This study will also contribute in enriching the ongoing research efforts in theory building in the area of media and development. In terms of methodological significance, the present study does not presume to develop new techniques in studying the press. However, the methodological significance of this study lies in creating data for further studies in this and related areas.

The practical significance of the present study is obvious. This is because the research findings are likely to provide not only new information

but also offer alternatives for the government, media organisations, professionals and the average Nigerian about the press and participatory governance.

It is expected that the findings of the study would also be useful in modifying or even changing the predominant values and attitudes about media responsibilities in terms of reaching out to rural and disadvantaged groups. This will, hopefully, help us all shape a better course for the press as it seeks to contribute to national development.

1.8 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This work investigates and critiques the role of the press in promoting participation and empowerment from 1999-2002, during the Obasanjo democratic regime. A survey is conducted in seven cities, representing the six geo-political regions in Nigeria – namely: Lagos, Port Harcourt, Enugu, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Jos and Abuja. It is interesting to note that the selected cities were seats of the former regional governments during the colonial and post-colonial period and are still seats of governments at the state and federal levels today. In addition, they are also important media centres and therefore representative of not only the Nigeria populace, but also its media organisations, since the Nigerian media is predominantly an urban phenomenon.

The period covered by the study (1999-2002) was chosen primarily to enable us analyse and critique the current democratic dispensation in the

country. Nonetheless, the scope is inevitably broader because the necessary historical information about the Nigerian media, which goes back to pre-colonial times, has been provided as background to the study.

The findings and analysis in this study are therefore limited to 1999-2002. These findings enable us to critique the media's performance during the Obasanjo democratic regime. The strong global opinion that multi-party democracy is superior to any regime type in guaranteeing human rights and sustainable development makes possible comparative analysis with a military regime irrelevant.

The limitations are further seen in the methodology, which relies heavily on the questionnaire survey in the six geo-political regions in the country. This wide coverage proved to be quite expensive and made it impossible for the researcher to also undertake a content analysis of some selected media, which was part of the initial plan. However, in-depth interviews were conducted with some media practitioners, executives and scholars in an attempt to remedy the limitation.

Since the scope of the study does not go beyond seven Nigerian cities, this would tend to limit our generalisations of the findings, even though the spread is fairly representative of the active participants in the Nigerian media.

1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study is organised into five chapters. Chapter One, which is introductory, establishes the basis of interest in the research area and

identifies the specific problems the study would tackle. It goes further to give a general outline of the research design, definition and explanation of concepts, objectives, significance of the study and the scope and limitation of the study. Chapter Two embodies the literature review and theoretical framework of the study. Because of the important issues raised in this study, the chapter is divided into two broad sections – I and II. Section I highlights the significance of communication for development and traces the historical reprise of development efforts in the Third World or developing countries. Section II concentrates to a greater extent on the historical development of the press under study and discusses the theoretical framework of the study. It touches on the social character of the press since inception through to contemporary times – depicting its role within the period.

Chapters Four embodies data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings. Chapter Five, which is the final chapter, deals with the summary of findings, wraps up with the conclusion and recommendations, highlighting the relevant implications of findings.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two deals with the literature review and theoretical framework of the study. Because of the important issues raised in this study the chapter is divided into two broad sections I and II.

Section I highlights the significance of communication for development and traces the historical reprise of development efforts in the Third World or less developed countries.

Section II concentrates to a greater extent on the historical development of the press under study and discusses the theoretical framework of study. It touches on the social character of the press since inception through to contemporary times – depicting its role within the period.

2.2 SECTION I

COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

The attention of the United Nations (UN) and its most influential member, the United States of America (USA), turned to developing countries in the 1950s and 1960s where two-thirds of the world's population resided. By 1955, this population enjoyed only 15 per cent of the world's income, being made up mainly of subsistence peasants (Van Soet, 1978).

It was the concern for the plight and future of these peasants that moved US President Harry Truman to propose the 1949 Point Four Program;

thus establishing a model which most of the developed world embraced. He noted that:

More than half of the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate, they are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and skill to relieve the suffering of these people (Daniels, 1951: 10-11).

Relieving Third World suffering consisted of making available the Western cornucopia of advances in agriculture, commerce, industry and health. The key to prosperity and peace, according to Truman (1949), was 'greater production' through "a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge" (Daniels, 1951: 11). The outcome of this proposal was called development.

Melkote (1991) has pointed out that although the traditional practices of the peasants of developing countries had enabled them to survive, the prevailing wisdom of the times dismissed them without any evaluation. It was known that western agriculture, medicines, tools and techniques were no match to corresponding traditional practices. It was therefore obvious that the Third World peasantry discard unconditionally their primitive ways and embrace the technologies which had brought extraordinary progress in the advanced countries. This orientation eventually came to be known as a pro-innovation bias (Rogers, 1976a).

Initially, the pro-innovation transfer paradigm appeared quite simple and straightforward. It has been derived mainly from the successful programme under the Marshall Plan to resuscitate war-ravaged Europe. The essence of the plan consisted of making financial and material resources available for pre-existing European expertise to apply to reconstruction (Arkes, 1972). However, it soon became clear that the post-colonial Third World problem was quite different. There was no adequate pre-existing base of expertise except within the colonialists themselves. But more importantly, the people of the Third World had to have their way of life changed radically, and only helped to re-establish themselves. Development in these countries therefore entailed not simply the transfer of technology, but also the communication of ideas, knowledge and skills to make possible the successful adoption of new ideas.

2.3 THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A classical study undertaken by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1961 showed the following striking correlations among all the developing countries of Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Table 1: Correlations between mass media and development

Factor	Per Capita Income (%)	Literacy (%)	Urbanisation (%)	Industrialisation (%)
Newsprint consumption per capita	0.83	0.82	0.69	0.68
Daily newspaper circulation per 100 persons	0.83	0.79	0.75	0.51
Cinema seating capacity per 100 persons	0.80	0.68	0.86	0.82
Number of radio receivers per 100 person	0.86	0.72	0.71	0.78

Source: UNESCO, 1961:17

The critical question here is “what do the results really mean?” Do they imply that the mass media can cause the development measured by these indicators? Or is the causal relationship the other way round? Is economic development a necessary prerequisite for, and does it lead to a well-developed media system? (Hedebro, 1982: 13). Curiously, the figures may prove neither. Like all correlations, they may imply that the two events occur simultaneously. They may just be two different aspects of the same change; a more developed media structure may be another indicator of the kind of economic development the other indicators express.

Nonetheless, there may also be some kind of causal relationship between the media and economic progress. Prior to this period, this question was not explicitly brought up, since communication (the media) had not been

given much attention in established theories of social change. Economic theories stressed capital accumulation, growth, investments and savings. Political theories saw such factors as power relations among different groups in society and leadership as central. Psychological theories emphasised the need for individual change and the acquisition of new attitudes and values favourable to modernisation.

It is therefore important for us to understand why the media was suddenly considered so essential in development. In what ways could it contribute to national development?

Daniel Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958) illustrates the earliest ideas about the role of the media in the modernisation or development process. To Lerner, modernisation or development was essentially westernisation. His social development model consisted of the following components: (i) a core of mobile individuals whose psychological orientation made it easier to accept rapid changes in their personal lives and the overall social system; (ii) an omnipotent mass media system that reinforced and accelerated societal and individual change by disseminating the new ideas and attitudes conducive to development, and (iii) the correlations between the important indices of urbanisation, literacy, media exposure and economic and political participation to establish a modern western-type society (Melkote, 1991: 82).

In Lerner's model, the mass media were both an index and agent of modernisation. Social change occurred in three phases. First and more

crucial was urbanisation. After about 10 per cent urbanisation was reached, the take-off occurred. In the second phase literacy rates begin to rise, with increasing rates of urbanisation, literacy and industrial development, the third phase witnessed the growth of the modern mass media. In Lerner's model, there was a close reciprocal relationship between literacy and mass media exposure. The literate developed the media, which in turn accelerated the spread of literacy. All these developments trigger a rise in political participation found in advanced societies (Melkote, 1991: 84). While all these generalisations come out of the data collected in the Middle East, Lerner suggested that the historical sequence of these changes was natural as exemplified in the development of western societies.

Lakshmana Rao (1963) also suggested in his classic Indian study that communication was prime mover in the development process. He selected two villages in India for his study; "Kothooru" - or the village just about to modernise, and "Pathooru", a village isolated and steeped in traditional customs and beliefs. Rao suggested that the laying of a new road to Kothooru from a nearby city started the process of modernisation. Among other things, this road brought new people, ideas and the mass media into the village while at the same time facilitating the villagers to visit the urban centres. This new situation and the subsequent information flow opened up people's minds in Kothooru. They were now not only ready for change but demanding and expecting it. The new ideas and innovations were first available to the elite and then trickled down to other sections in the village. It

was the quantity and quality of information that triggered change in Kothooru (Melkote, 1991).

The mass media brought in modern ideas and values from outside. Traditional ideas and modes of behaviour as they existed in Pathooru were gradually dislodged. More importantly, the new developments led to new jobs and higher productivity. As Schramm points out, "more productivity leads to improved income, to widening consuming habits, to increased widening consuming habits, to increased economic activity within the village (such as shops and restaurants), to new appetites for consumer goods, to a seeking after new opportunities, and so on, in a chain of related development (Schramm, 1964: 49).

While Lerner suggested the role of communication as the harbinger of new ideas from outside, Rao felt that new communication helped to smooth out the transition from a traditional to a modern community. When attempts are made to open a traditional society to modernising influences, the new information available to the people at the top and its eventual and autonomous trickle down to others in the lower levels of the hierarchy would increase empathy, open up new opportunities, and lead to a general breakdown of the traditional society.

2.4 A COMMUNICATION MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT

When Wilbur Schramm (1964) published *Mass Media and National Development*, written at the request of UNESCO, it rapidly became a cornerstone and generally summarised the thinking of that period amongst

mass media people. Together with Lerner's work (1958) and Pye (ed., 1963) it laid much of the groundwork for further research, both theoretical and applied and these works are still influential and relevant today - especially to our study.

The views of Schramm, Lerner, Pye and other scholars became widely accepted partially because they reflected the views held by media practitioners rather than the main findings of communication researchers. In 1960, Joseph Klapper published empirical findings that became a milestone in the continuous discussion of media impact. The conclusion Klapper drew was that the media have little or no direct effects on people. Rather, they tend to reinforce attitudes and behaviours that people already possess. Their potential for change was therefore small.

Schramm, Lerner and Pye all claimed more or less the opposite. In their view, media do have great potential for teaching people to behave and think differently

To these scholars, the key to national development was seen as a rapid increase in economic productivity. The role of the media was to mobilise human resources by substituting new norms, attitudes and behaviours for older ones to stimulate increased productivity. One of the psychological states of mind given particular attention was empathy (Lerner, 1958). Empathetic persons were those having great capacity to relate to new aspects of a changing environment. They had the capacity to put themselves in the situation of others. Closely related to this attribute was mobility, here

meaning a high capacity for change, being future oriented, rational, having augmented desires and coupled with the belief that something can be done to realise one's aspirations (Hedebro, 1982: 15).

Mobility could be experienced directly or indirectly via the media. The media could therefore act as mobility multipliers. An expanding, Lerner argued, spreads attitudes favourable to social change, and through other mechanisms these ideas will promote development.

His model, in its simplest form can be illustrated this way:-

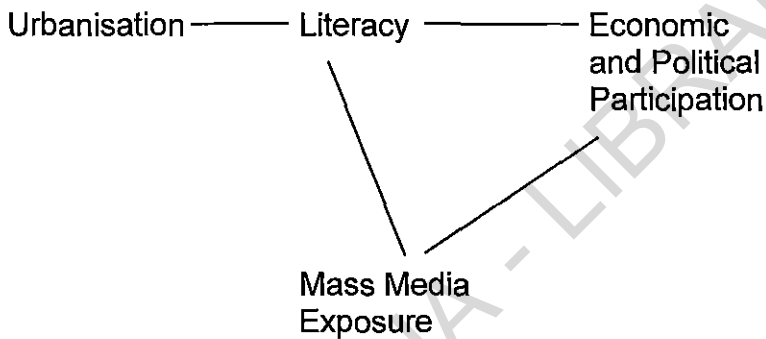


Figure 1.1 - Lerner's Communication Model for Development

Increased literacy is assumed to lead to increased media exposure, which, in turn, should stimulate participation.

Another closely related attribute considered important was a motivation to do well, to seek and meet challenges and to succeed. McClelland (1961) called this a "need for achievement", and it was seen as an essential characteristic of modern individuals and societies. The degree of achievement orientation is seen as culturally determined, being passed on through child-rearing practices and behavioural norms within the family.

Thus, the first observation is that the task of the media should be to alter people's psychological or mental set. There should be a change in how people think. This particular view of how development is brought about has been a prominent feature of this tradition ever since. A similar study is that of Inkeles and Smith (1974) who see development primarily as a question of individual change.

According to Inkeles and Smith, an important aim of the media should be to teach the new skills necessary in a modern society. They identified the great need for new information in all areas of a rapidly changing society in education, agriculture, health, industrial skills and literacy. The teaching of new skills would make people want even more information, especially once they could read and write (Hedebro, 1982: 16).

By establishing a wide-ranging mass media system, knowledge and skills could be multiplied much more rapidly and inexpensively than before. The media might compensate for the lack of teachers, schools and educational materials (Schramm 1967).

In addition, several scholars also stressed the importance of creating a sense of nation-ness. Many developing countries are mixtures of different cultures, languages, political systems and religious beliefs. This is regarded as a serious obstacle to social change on the national level. People should be concerned, not with improvements in their local area only, but they must understand the needs of other villages or areas as well. The presence of the mass media, it was argued, can expand people's horizons and enlarge their

focus of interest to include other regions besides the local one. Furthermore, the mass media present possibilities of promoting the use of one common language for the sake of mutual understanding among various ethnic groups. It is only when there is a feeling of concern for the nation as whole can development be brought about. Only then are people prepared to make sacrifices for others outside the local community.

Some scholars have rightly stressed the need for participation by the people in the development efforts and in political decision making. Many projects have evidently failed simply because the people who were to gain from the project were not listened to. It is our contention in this study that participation is a necessary precondition for successful attempts to change or build a nation. Different authors imply varying degrees of participation, but the general idea is the same; a dialogue increases the likelihood that change will be accepted by the people affected. And it is obvious that this cannot take place if the people are not empowered through this participatory approach.

Following are the major functions for communication in a developing society as advanced by these and other scholars of that time (fifties and sixties) (Hedebro, 1982: 18).

2.5 COMMUNICATION FUNCTIONS

- i) The mass media can create a climate for change by inducing new values, attitudes and modes of behaviour favourable to development.

- ii) The mass media can teach new skills “from literacy to agriculture to hygiene to repairing a car” (Schramm, 1967: 18).
- iii) The mass media can act as multipliers of resources of knowledge.
- iv) The mass media are unique in the sense that they can mediate vicarious experiences, thereby reducing the psychic and economic costs of creating mobile personalities.
- v) Communication can raise levels of aspiration, which can in turn act as incentives for action.
- vi) Communication can make people more prone to participate in decision-making in society.
- vii) Communication can help the people find new norms and harmony in a period of transition (Rao, 1966).
- viii) Communication can change the power structure in a society of a traditional character by bringing knowledge to the masses. The informed person takes on greater significance and traditional leaders whose power is based on other factors will be challenged.
- ix) Communication can create a sense of nation-ness.
- x) Communication can help the majority of the population to realise its own importance, and this may lead to increased political activity (Rao, 1966).
- xi) Communication facilitates the planning and implementation of development programmes that will correspond to the needs of the population.

- xii) Communication can make economic, social and political development a self-perpetuating process.

These various points express the firm belief that communication could contribute in an important way to strivings for improved living conditions in developing countries.

2.6 CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN DEVELOPMENT

The general note of optimism that reigned in the fifties and sixties regarding the role and potential of the mass media in the development process in the Third World changed in the seventies and led early optimists like Wilbur Schramm to note that "mass media have proved in many countries to be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for development" (Schramm, 1977: 4).

When Wilbur Schramm Mass media and National Development appeared in 1964, social scientists thought they had finally understood the nature of development and the role of communication in that process.

However, to quote Rogers, "the ensuing decade shows us that our conception of development was rather limited and perhaps not entirely correct. Today, we see that past notions don't entirely fit the reality and potential of the contemporary scene." (Rogers, 1976:121).

In short, the old paradigm implied that poverty was equivalent to underdevelopment, and the obvious way for less developed countries to develop was for them to become more like the developed countries. Karl Marx in Das Kapital (quoted in Rogers 1976:146) observed that: "The country

that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed, the image of its own future! Lerner (1967:115) stated that: "Indeed, the Western model is virtually an inevitable baseline for Asian development planning because there is no other model which can serve this purpose." This predominance of the Western paradigm of development was probably correct at the time of Lerner's writing.

It was less obvious that the industrially advanced nations largely controlled the "rules of the game of development. And also that most of the scholars writing about development were Westerners. The balances of payment and monetary exchange rates were largely determined in New York, London and Washington. The International technical assistance programme was sponsored by the rich nations, unfortunately, made the recipients even more dependent on the donors.

The main architects of the communication approach in the dominant paradigm such as Lerner (1958), Pye (1963), Schramm (1964) and Fey (1966) did not examine the relationship between the institutional structures of the media and their impact on media content. Rogers (1976:135) correctly observed concerning this phenomenon that:

By the late 1960s and the 1970s a number of critical evaluations were being made of the mass communication role in development. Some scholars, especially in Latin America, perceived the mass media in their nations as an extension of exploitative relationships with the U.S. based multinational corporations, especially through advertising of commercial products. Further, questions were asked about the frequent patterns of elite ownership and

control of mass media institutions in Latin America and the influence of such ownership on the media content.

Melkote (1991) has rightly pointed out that even if governments in some developing countries actively promote a pro-development content in their mass media, it has to be viewed from the perspective of the total programme structure constructed for each medium, and the total time allotted to each type of programme. For example, although the government in Nigeria claims commitment to rural development and carries rural programmes, which can be categorised as pro-development, the total percentage of such programmes is very low. Thus, there is the anomaly of rural programmes being pro-development but the total time accorded to such programmes being rather insignificant.

There are other concerns even when media messages in developing countries are pro-development. For instance, there is the question of selective exposure of the audience to particular media messages because their selectivity is often towards messages, which may not be pro-development. As Rogers observed on one of his visits to a developing country: "the only radio in the village, owned by the president of the village council, was tuned to music rather than to news of the outside world" (Rogers, 1969:96).

In the second instance, there is also the question of comprehension of the media content even if the rural peasant chose to listen to pro-development programmes. The absence of programming or production of news in regional or major languages and the irrelevant content due to the largely urban control of media production make messages unsuitable for rural audiences (Masani, 1975).

The development communication literature, due to its inadequate consideration of message content (Vilanilam, 1979) and differences in their use and perception by the audiences has made little contribution to the understanding and solution of these problems.

The mass media in their present form in many developing countries are not suited for the kinds of developmental tasks they have to perform and western – originated examples and assumptions are irrelevant to the Third World situation (Eapen, 1975; Masani, 1975). An adequate response to the challenging task of empowerment for all at least for the broadcast media would:

Involve a re-consideration of the structure of the broadcasting system, the location of transmitters and studios and the language and content of programmes. It is clear that unless policies are changed, the services expanded and decentralised, there is little chance of the mass media playing a significant role in bringing about rural change (Masani, 1975:2).

The mass media in developing nations like other social institutions can reinforce or increase existing inequities between the advantaged and disadvantaged sectors of the population. This “increasing knowledge gap” first proposed by Tichenor and others (1970) argued that:

As the infusion of mass media information into a social system increases, segments of the population with higher socio-economic status tend to acquire this information at a faster rate than the lower status segments, so that the gap in knowledge between these segments tends to increase rather than decrease (Tichenor et al, 1970:159).

This knowledge gap could be socially significant. Differentials in knowledge could lead to greater tension in a social system, giving rise to greater disparities between different sectors of the population.

In developing countries like India, most development benefits have tended to accrue to better-off segments... than to the downtrodden for which they... may have been intended... (Shingi and Mody, 1976:83).

To summarise, it is clear that the scientific knowledge, research, models etc. that were exported mainly from the U.S. to developing countries were best suited to the socio-economic, political, cultural and structural arrangements in the U.S. and not any developing country. The mass media, in particular were criticized for: (i) Their trivial and non-development content, (ii) for giving rise to a revolution of rising frustrations in developing countries and (iii) for increasing knowledge gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged sectors of the population.

On the other hand, the diffusion of innovations research was criticised for:

- a). Its emphasis on exposure to the mass media by the audience and its inattention to the message content of the mass media.
- b). Its pro-technological bias.
- c). Pro-source bias;
- d). Pro-persuasion bias;
- e). One way message flow bias; and

f). Its pro-progressive farmer bias. This led to an increase in the socio-economic and communication gaps between the progressive and subsistence farmers.

Thus scholars, researchers and administrators in both 'developed' and 'developing' nations became increasingly dissatisfied with the notion of development. Ironically, the plight of the very poor in developing countries had not improved significantly since the sixties. If anything the situation seems to have deteriorated.

This situation called for a change in the concept of development. Thus, there was a move away from the earlier technologically deterministic and GNP – centred definitions to alternative concepts that were more qualitative. These new concepts stressed (i) Equity in distribution of information and other benefits of development, (ii) Independence of local communities to tailor development projects to their own objectives, (iii) Integration of the old and new ideas, the traditional and modern systems to constitute a unique blend suited to the needs of a particular community.

Administrators and researchers alike realised that the development process was not as straightforward and clear-cut as it was earlier conceptualised. There were too many extraneous variables that impacted on the process (Melkote, 1991: 138).

Thus the mass media, far from being the independent variable in the change process, were affected by other factors.

The following comments from Beltran (1976: 19) conveyed the new concerns of scholars from the Third World.

- i) Overall change of social structure is the fundamental prerequisite for the attainment of genuine human and democratic development.
- ii). Communication, as it exists in the region, not only is by nature impotent to cause national development by itself, but it often works against development - in favour of the ruling minority.
- iii) Communication itself is so subdued to the influence of the prevailing organisational arrangement of society that it can hardly be expected to act independently as a main contributor to profound and widespread social transformation.

It was therefore very clear in the developing countries that social-structural constraints diminished and even eliminated the influence of the media in overcoming development problems (Rogers, 1976b).

As our analysis has shown, the main communication, often called the dominant paradigm at the early period, can be criticised on several counts. Both the formulation of the problems and the solution suggested were based so that only a very narrow part of the problem could be met. Some may find it unfair to criticise ways of thinking brought forward more than four to five decades ago and to evaluate them from a position today. However, as Hedebro (1982) has pointed out, the scientific process is fundamentally critical. Old theories are criticised and revised in the light of empirical evidence and other experiences. This process then repeats itself over time.

Criticism and new ways of looking at a problem constitute necessary and essential components of research.

In our analysis of the dominant paradigm, it is clear that there is a benign neglect of social-structural and political constraints to development because 'alien premises', objects and methods influenced the field of communication research. The scientific knowledge, research models etc that were exported mainly from the US to developing countries were best suited to the socio-economic, political, cultural and structural arrangements in the USA.

2.7 ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

As pointed out earlier, the concept of development changed quite drastically in the seventies. There was a move away from the earlier technologically deterministic and GNP-centred definitions to alternative conceptions that were more qualitative. Everett Rogers (Rogers with Shoemaker, 1971) who was criticised for his earlier definition that stressed industrialisation and economic growth and neglected other human factors; summarised the newer concept of development, thus:

A widely participatory process of social change in a society; intended to bring about both social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities), for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment (Rogers, 1976b: 133).

Denis Goulet (1971: xx), a political economist, saw development as:

Freeing men from nature's servitude, from economic backwardness and oppressive technological institutions, from unjust class structures and political exploiters, from cultural and psychic alienation - in short from all of life's inhuman agencies.

In another context, Goulet (1973) has described development as holistic, and included a clean environment, growth and equity, provision of basic needs such as food, shelter, education, etc.

Generally speaking, the definitions of development were pluralistic and indicated several new goals for meaningful and real development in the Third World (Rogers, 1976c; Hedebro, 1982).

2.7.1 Equity in distribution of information and other benefits of development

Here, the emphasis was placed on the poorest of the poor, those living in urban slums and backward rural areas. The widening gap between the advantaged groups and the disadvantaged has to be closed. Growth with equity was the clarion call. And it is these differences that study on the development communication and empowerment in Nigeria further brings out.

Paulo Freire was an exponent of the idea of participation for liberation. Freire (1971) and Illich (1969) criticised the western educational systems in Central and Latin America. For Freire, education and communication have to be participative and receiver-centred. And it is also our contention in this study that communication, rather than being top-down, should be dialectic, helping people to understand the world around them and liberating them from

the oppressive tyranny of a world view created by the elite to serve their own ends.

Contemporary research on development communication has suggested relevant communication strategies for narrowing the socio-economic gap between groups in the Third World, despite the absence of major structural changes at the macro-level. Some of these strategies are:

- a). To narrow the communication gap between those on high and low socio- economic levels.
- b) To identify and overcome the pro-literacy bias in development communication strategies, and
- c) To tailor messages to the needs and interests of the lower socio-economic groups.

The current emphasis in development communication is not only on access to communication media, participation in media programming. The assumption is that participation in media production leads to participation in community development (Mda, 1993).

This is a shift from the marketing approach, known as “persuasive communications”, to a participatory approach. In persuasive communication, the mass media are used to beam messages or directives encouraging people to support development projects and to highlight the benefits: that may follow from these projects. In participatory communication, the message can emanate from any point, and be added to, questioned and responded to from any other point.

The needs of rural communities are thereby taken into account, since the communities can initiate the process of communication; and do not merely consume and respond to messages that come from 'above'.

Government policy may encourage community participation in development but an examination of the communication structures in the country will show that they do reflect the reality of community participation, e.g. Lesotho (Mda, 1993: 37).

The radio is the major medium of development communication because most villagers have access to it. But this access is limited to the reception of messages and does not extend to the production and distribution of messages.

An important consideration is therefore, how to find a way to draw rural communities into participatory communication rather than the purely information-giving or transfer-of-content model currently used.

For communication to be complete and effective, it must be two-way instead a top-down, one-way flow of information. However, for communication to be two-way, there must be communication among community members themselves (MIT Report, 1987: 1).

Community members can only produce and distribute messages if there is dialogue within the community itself. They should be able to analyse their objective situation critically, and assess their needs in the context of structural factors that contribute to their underdevelopment. This means that they must have a critical awareness of those factors, hence the search for a

model of communication that will not only disseminate messages on development but will also bring about that critical awareness.

Development communication scholars such as Berigan (1979), Hedebro (1982) and Felstchausen (1973) find the ideas of Paulo Freire (1970, 1972 and 1974) particularly useful in analysing a process that leads to critical awareness. As an adult educator, Freire's practice is based on the idea that education is a process of conscientisation in which the community is helped to articulate its problems, and then to provide solutions to those problems. This means that education must give people tools by which they can understand and change society. This applies to communication as well.

Freire characterises the communication process as transformational, meaning that communication transforms knowledge and ideas, and consequently reality itself. Since knowledge and ideas as concepts influence how people perceive and act upon nature, communication unveils and transforms the social environment (Felstenhausen, 1973: 48).

Freire contends that the average rural community member is not an empty vessel into which facts can be poured, but a knowing being. Thus, the task of the communicator is to activate the community to express its needs, to formulate solutions, and to organise politically to achieve its goals. Participation therefore becomes an essential element of liberation.

2.8 SECTION II

This section concentrates on the historical development of the press as one of the agencies and institutions of social change in Nigeria. It discusses the social character of the press since inception through the years – depicting its role within the period.

2.9 THE EMERGENCE OF THE PRESS IN NIGERIA

The media must be understood to refer to both the print and electronic media. An operational definition of mass media was attempted which yielded the following as actual activities that would fall under the label: newspapers, journals/magazines, radio, television, music, drama, town crier and news agencies. Based on this outline and others, the mass media can be defined as “any agency, modern or traditional, that operates for the articulation and dissemination of ideas and information, generally with the intent to influence or control an audience or the institution that constitute legalised power and authority” (Yusuf, 1992: 282).

Our study is concerned with the media generally, but more specifically the press or print media.

The print media is perhaps the oldest medium of communication after the spoken word. Written communication has existed between nations since the invention of calligraphy, with the use of papyrus in ancient Egypt, thousand of years ago. Thus, before the invention of movable type in the 15th century, all writing was done by hand (manuscript). But then, from about 1440-50, when a German scientist, Johannes Guttenberg of Mainz invented

the movable type, written communication took a very dramatic turn. When William Caxton set up the first press in England in 1476, he had only laid the foundation for many colonies of Britain to follow much later. Today, not only is the press popular throughout the world, but it is also one of the most organised media of communication.

2.10 THE PRESS IN NIGERIA: 1859-1920

The origin of the newspaper press in Nigeria is somewhat obscure, since it is a matter of controversy as to whether or not the British brought reading and writing to Nigeria. Before the coming of the Europeans, the Muslims in the country were well advanced in the reading and writing of the Arabic language (Best, 1996: 10).

It has been noted that for over half a century, the Nigerian press was synonymous with the Lagos press (Coker, 1971: 46) – or, generally speaking, the press in the southern part of Nigeria. The geographical expansion of the press did in fact start first in the east, then west and finally in the north. This trend follows the pattern of progress by which European education and influence spread throughout the territories now collectively known as Nigeria. Western education was one of the methods of evangelisation adopted by Christian missionaries in West Africa. Journalism was not as widely used as the schools, but it played an important role in the general enlightenment of the early converts and other Christians.

Fred Omu (1976) points out that newspapers had been established as an essential instrument of mission work outside Britain because of the

effective use the British humanitarian movement made of it in mobilising support for their programmes. Many changes were also taking place in British newspaper history during the era of the humanitarian movement. There was the technological revolution, the expansion of the reading public as well as the increased demand for self-education. All these factors were interacting one with another and transforming the character of the newspaper, which became a major agency of organised public campaigns and enlightenment.

This situation obviously influenced British missionaries in Nigeria and West Africa as a whole to raise the printing press into an important instrument of missionary enterprise. The result of this was the proliferation of printing presses and mission-inspired newspapers in West Africa during the first half of the nineteenth century. According to Omu, the pioneer of this movement was the unnamed bi-monthly journal published in Liberia by the Methodist Mission Press in Monrovia (Omu, 1976: 8).

In Nigeria, the Presbyterian missionaries started the first printing press when they arrived in Calabar in 1846 (Omu, *op cit*: 9). However, it was not until eight years later that the Rev. Henry Townsend of the Anglican Mission fitted up a printing press and started a printing school in Abeokuta.

In December 1859, Townsend started the first publication of a newspaper in Nigeria called *Iwe Irohin fun Awon ara Egba ati Yoruba* – a Yoruba phrase which means “A newspaper for the Egba and the Yoruba information of Egba people in Yoruba land” (Omu, 1976: 5). Thus, the newspaper was for the Yoruba tribe.

In a dispatch to the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in England, out of excitement over this unique accomplishment in a predominantly illiterate society, Rev. Townsend noted: "I have set on foot a Yoruba newspaper... My objective is to get the people to read... to beget the habit of seeking information by reading" (Coker, 1971: 1). He thus became the first person to introduce modern means in the process of mass communication which gradually led the way in replacing traditional means of communication like the talking drums and village troubadours as a means of mass communication in Nigeria. It is important to note at this point that it was an individual, rather than an organisation or government, who first conceived of the idea of the essence of a mass system of communication that would reach heterogeneous members of the public.

Iwe Irohin became a bi-lingual (English and Yoruba) newspaper soon after its establishment and gave the missionaries a forum for airing their views. The articles in the paper were didactic and treated a variety of subjects ranging from religion, mathematics and geography to spelling. Omu points out that the readers of *Iwe Irohin* were converts and school children in Abeokuta, numbering about 400, out of an estimated population of 150,000 (Omu, 1976: 6). It is also likely that the newspaper's audience included surrounding mission stations in the interior of Yoruba land and Lagos – whose literate community was growing rapidly at that time.

The *Iwe Irohin* saw its end in 1876 when it was used as a political organ in the Ijaye war between the Egbas and Ibadan. It thus disappeared

from the news stands in the same year and its proprietor and other Europeans were expelled from Abeokuta and its printing press destroyed. During this period, other newspapers emerged. These included the *Lagos Observer* (1880); *Lagos Times* (later *Lagos Weekly Record*) (1891); *Lagos Standard* (1903); *The Chronicle* (1908) and the *Nigerian Times* (1914) (Idemili, 1980: 84-87).

Since most of the early missionaries and merchants came with their small presses that could only handle simple printings like pamphlets, they published unrecorded newssheets for circulation within their organisations and some literate Nigerians to acquaint them with the happenings in the country. What is interesting about this early press is that it did not at first seek to form or change opinion. In fact, the official government gazettes that were published did not amount to more than a ritual of ordered and civilised government (Idemili, *op cit*).

Although it did not last for a long time, the *Iwe Irohin* set some standards for news papering in Nigeria. It is noteworthy that some of the later vernacular newspapers patterned their format of production after the *Iwe Irohin*. A significant contribution this paper made was in revitalising the printing school, and thus increasing the number of apprentice printers – some of who later printed some of the early nationalist newspapers (Omu, *op cit*: 6-7).

Idemili points out that midway in its life, *Iwe Irohin* had stimulated the establishment of the *Anglo-African* in Lagos, which became the father of

newspapers that grew and developed in that city from 1880 and began to spread to the hinterland in the 1920s.

When the *Anglo-African* appeared in 1863, its role was mainly to give information about the activities and edicts of the colonial government; and to circulate shipping and other commercial information. Note that at this point, it was an individual, rather than an organisation or government, who first conceived of the idea of the essence of a mass system of communication that would reach heterogeneous members of the public.

Although most of the newspapers of this early period were mainly didactic and handed out edicts of government (or the lawgiver), some expressed the idea of African self-government as early as the 1880s. For example, when Lagos was a settlement under the governance of the Gold Coast colony, a local newspaper, the *Lagos Times*, in 1881, wrote:

... We are not clamouring for immediate independence... but it should be borne in mind that the present order of things will not last forever. A time will come when the British colonies on the West Coast will be left to regulate their own internal and external affairs" (Uche, 1989: 93-94).

The *Times*, no doubt, opened the way for a militant and nationalistic press in Nigeria. It started the first pitched press war between the Nigerian nationalists fighting for independence and the British colonial administrators.

According to press historian, Fred Omu, fifty-one newspapers were published between 1880 and 1937. These consisted of eleven dailies, thirty-three weeklies, three fortnightlies and four monthlies. Omu notes that:

Excepting fifteen provincial weeklies, all these newspapers were conducted in Lagos, which has remained the centre of the most developed newspaper industry in Africa (Omu, 1976: 10).

With the years, the press gradually changed, and this is characteristic of the Nigerian or African press in general. In fact, the progress of the press has been so rapid that it is now commonly imagined that the local press began as a devoted crusader against colonialism and imperialism. According to K.A.B. Jones-Quartey, the press did not take on the garb of freedom fighter until late in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, it is clear that once the press began to make itself felt, it never ceased to do so, even if at times it subsided in this role.

One general feature of the Nigerian newspapers until 1925 was that due to the largely crude production methods, none of them could go daily. However, it was this generation of the early newspapers that laid the foundation and set the tone on which modern Nigerian journalism developed and also found its vibrant voice – despite the cultural differences that affected the development of the press in different parts of the country.

2.11 THE PRESS OF THE NORTH

The development of the press in the old and present day Northern Nigeria (made up of nineteen northern states) deserves special mention for obvious reasons. One of these is that it still lags behind the Lagos press.

After the formation of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria in 1899, the region was administered as a separate political entity. However, economic difficulties led to the amalgamation of the region with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria into a single unit in 1914, with Lugard (the former High Commissioner of the Northern region) as the governor of the newly constituted Nigeria. The north, however, was made politically separate a decade later, thus removing it from those influences which shaped the politics and journalism of the southern elite (Best, 1996: 40).

Thus, many reasons were responsible for the north's isolation and consequent backwardness. There were cultural differences and uneven development between the two regions. As noted elsewhere, the northern region is predominantly influenced by the Islamic religion while the south is predominantly influenced by Christianity. Since European contact with Nigeria was by way of the Atlantic Ocean, the impact of their contact was felt earlier in the coastal areas of the south. Besides the late contact with European influence, the north which had been under the influence of Islamic culture for hundreds of years was reluctant to adopt the new ideas brought by the arrival of Western culture. Consequently, the south developed on western standards, both materially and politically, more than the north.

These differences in culture, religion and in the level of western 'development' were heightened by the British policy which deliberately prevented the spread of western education in the north, so as to be able to preserve the indirect rule system. The colonial government in agreement with

Islamic leaders, did not allow the Christian missionaries – the education bearing agents – to operate freely in the north, and they did very little to see that education was provided by the non-religious government. What little education that was provided by the colonial government was directed mainly toward satisfying the requirements of the indirect rule or for the children of the aristocrats and few other workers.

One generally approved feature of the Richard's Constitution of 1947 was that it brought Nigerian representatives from the north into the legislative council to discuss the affairs of the territory in common with their southern brothers. But then, this confrontation was bound to reveal north-south differences; and the south following its political leadership, tended to increase these differences rather than reducing them especially between 1947 and 1953 (Hydle, 1972: 158).

2.12 THE GOVERNMENT AND THE NORTHERN PRESS (1939-1980)

The government in the old Northern Nigeria had the most important hand in fostering vernacular literature, including newspapers. This is unlike the southern part of the country where there has been strong competition between government and private publications. The establishment of a Translation Bureau had the production of school textbooks in Hausa as its main task. Books that were produced in those days included *Labaru na Da da na Yanzu* (accounts of former and modern times), and *Labarun Hausawa*

da Makwabtansu (accounts of the Hausa and their neighbours) (Norla, 1970, No. 2: 166-169).

This shows that even at this early stage, the bureau did not limit itself to translation only but also encouraged literary development especially local authorship. This was recognised in the 1930s by a change of name to "Literature Bureau" situated at Zaria, and with the late Dr. R.M. East as its director. The staff and scope of its work expanded at that time with publications like Abubakar Imam's volume, *Magana Jari Ce* (speech is capital), among other words. Imam's rare artistic and compositional abilities had captured Dr. East's attention and later with the assistance of the Emir of Katsina, he persuaded Imam to join the Literature Bureau. Before the Second World War, government had published a tri-lingual (English, Hausa, Arabic) quarterly news sheet called *Jaridar Nijeriya ta Arewa* (Northern Provinces Newspaper). This paper did not do much in terms of informing people about up-to-date local, national or international issues (Dudley, 1968: 8).

Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo (Truth is worth more than a penny), a Hausa language newspaper was established in 1939 and soon became the press voice of educated northern Nigerians. The talented Abubakar Imam became the first Hausa editor of the newspaper and was assisted by L.C. Giles, an administrative officer with the colonial government, who was made editor-manager of the newspaper to teach the Hausa editor the rudiments of

journalism and the mechanics of newspaper production, as well as "advise him on the selection of local news items".

Gaskiya's style of writing was more informative and moderate than that of the southern nationalist press, and editorially, it did not oppose the basic government structure of the north. However, it supported reforms in the system of Native Administration and more education for everyone at all levels, and greater contact with the outside world. Mallam Aminu Kano, later leader of the radical Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), and Mallam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, then a Bauchi headmaster, and later Prime Minister of Nigeria, were among those whose written views were first published by *Gaskiya*.

Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo and the Northern Provinces News sheets published by the *Gaskiya Corporation* in other languages like Fulani, Tiv and Kanuri dominated the northern Nigerian newspaper scene for many years before other newspapers were started there around the late 1940s. This process started when Zik Press Limited acquired Dutse Mohammed Ali's *Weekly Comet* and converted it into a daily in 1945.

The *Comet* was founded at Lagos in 1933 and was transferred to Kano in 1949 and was printed there for the first time in the same year. It became one of the early daily newspapers in northern Nigeria. The *Comet* was bought in Lagos by the Zik chain and moved to Kano for the purpose of promoting the interests of the newly formed National Council of Nigeria and the Camerouns (NCNC) led by Zik.

Kano is the traditional commercial capital of the northern region, and when the *Comet* first arrived there, it was with excitement that the people welcomed it; more so because it was a bi-lingual broad based news sheet published in English and Hausa respectively. Between the late 1950s and 1960s, proprietorship of the *Comet* was taken over by the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). However, because of their uncompromising political journalism after the fashion of the *West African Pilot*, the *Comet* ran into trouble from time to time at the hands of the local authorities who acted on the instigation of British administrative officers.

However, in spite of this hostility and competition from older newspapers from Lagos, the *Comet* was able to "eke out a hand-to-mouth existence" for many years, and increased the awareness of its audience about the political and other social happenings in and outside the country (Uche, 1989: 93).

Another newspaper to appear in the north in the early 1950s was the *Northern Advocate* based in Jos, headquarters of Tin mining in the region. However, the paper went out of print after an irregular existence of about eighteen months.

In the late 1950s, the *Daily Comet* of Kano was joined by another equally political and partisan newspaper in Jos, the base of the defunct *Northern Advocate*. This newcomer was the *Middle-Belt Herald*, also a daily. Another daily was started at Maiduguri, called the *Borno People's Voice*. Both newspapers were launched by the Action Group (AG) party. The Action

Group was formed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the 1940s in order to support its northern allies and also to counter the Northern People's Congress (NPC) which received a general support from Gaskiya and the semi-weekly *Nigerian Citizen* (Coker, 1968: 21).

The *Middle-Belt Herald* and *Bornu People's Voice* were also part of the preparations of the Action Group party and its allies for the general elections to the federal parliament which were to be held in December 1959. Coker points out that after the elections, and following the failure of that party to win majority seats and rule the federation, the papers started a downward slide (Coker, op cit).

While the Action Group newspapers were dwindling and disappearing, another partisan newspaper came to the scene. This newcomer was sponsored by the Northern People's Congress (NPC), and was launched in 1961 with the name *Daily Mail*. However, it went out of print two years later, giving way for arrangements for the Gaskiya Corporation to establish another newspaper.

The *Nigerian Citizen* was launched by the Gaskiya Corporation in 1948 as a twice-weekly newspaper to serve the growing English language audience in the north. Although the *Citizen* had a substantial circulation in the north, it was too closely identified with the NPC to win readers outside the party's stronghold. The *New Nigerian*, which began publication in Kaduna in January 1966, replaced the *Citizen* to offset the negative impression the *Citizen* had created which prevented more circulation.

An interesting aspect about the early northern Nigerian press is that the newspapers that did not disappear and were comparatively successful were government sponsored or financed. This is because government had the most stable financial base. Unfortunately, this is still very much the trend throughout northern Nigeria.

Other newspapers that were launched in the north between the 1970s and 1980s include the *Benue Voice*, *The Triumph*, the *Trumpeter*, the *Nigerian Standard*, *Yancin Dan Adam* (man's freedom) – in English and Hausa languages respectively. Both were also published by the Plateau State government. The *Triumph* is published in Kano by the state government and also the *Nigerian Herald* published by the Kwara State government. Periodicals or magazines in indigenous languages and English have also continued.

2.13 THE MODERN NIGERIAN PRESS

This era is marked by the introduction of better production techniques, which made it possible for some newspapers to go daily with the addition of sports and entertainment coverage as well as the use of photographs.

The first newspaper to go daily was the *Lagos Daily News*, established in 1925 by Victor Bababomi. The paper was later acquired by Herbert Macaulay, who saw the need for newspaper ownership when an editor refused to publish his article for fear of libel. The *Lagos Daily News*

subsequently became the official organ of his party – the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) (Okonkwo, 1976).

When the *Lagos Daily News* came into being, another prominent nationalist and journalist of the time, Ernest Ikoli, was having problems financing his *African Messenger* which he set up in 1921. It was colonial policy at the time to make the production and circulation of newspapers difficult for the critical nationalist press and the *African Messenger* became a victim of that unfavourable atmosphere (Uche, 1989).

In 1926, the *African Messenger* was acquired by the Nigerian Printing and Publishing Company, publishers of the *Nigeria Daily Times*. The board of the company decided to put Ikoli's popularity to good use by hiring him to edit the *Nigerian Daily Times*. This proved advantageous to the newspaper as its credibility soared and within a short time, it became the leading newspaper in the country.

With newspapers like the *Lagos Daily News* and *Nigerian Daily Times* (which later became *Daily Times*) in the forefront, the Nigerian newspapers maintained the tradition of fiery criticism of colonialism and consistent advocacy of self-rule already well established in the era of John Payne Jackson and the *Lagos Weekly Record*. By 1936, Macaulay's *Lagos Daily News* had folded up, but the very next year was to see a very memorable event in Nigerian journalism. This was the arrival of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (popularly known as Zik) on the Nigerian journalism scene. Azikiwe had been educated in the United States of America. On his return, he launched his

career in journalism as one of the founding editors of the *African Morning Post* in Ghana (then known as the Gold Coast). By 1934, he had become a senior editor responsible for the editorial content of the paper.

Azikiwe, probably more than most of his contemporaries, recognised the power of the press and its potential for arousing nationalist sentiments. A leading African nationalist who later became the first president of the Republic of Nigeria in 1963, he believed that:

Schools are important, but the press is a much wider and more potent avenue for this particular mission. And the pen is said to be mightier than sword. There is no better means to arouse African peoples than that of the pen and the tongue (Azikiwe, 1937: 17).

The arrival of Nnamdi Azikiwe in Nigeria from Ghana in 1937 injected new life into anti-colonialism and journalism that many scholars believe was only interrupted by the Second World War. According to Okonkwo,

Zik came to Nigeria with the promise of providing an effective vehicle for the vigorous ventilation of the suppressed grievances, to fill a partial journalistic vacuum which then existed in the country (Okonkwo, 1976: 6).

He achieved this by founding the famous *West African Pilot* in 1937, a newspaper which he edited himself. Zik's background prepared him well for the role that he was to play. Jones-Quartey points out that with the *Pilot*, "Zik came as the answer to the prayers of the people on the other side of the dividing line – between the privileged and the underprivileged" (Jones-Quartey, 1965: 147).

Zik's influence since 1937 in the struggle for independence and Nigerian journalism in general occupies a significant place in Nigerian history for he is popularly acknowledged as the doyen of modern Nigerian journalism.

Among other political journalists of his days like Andrew Thomas of the *Lagos Times*, John and Horatio Jackson of the *Lagos Weekly Record* and Herbert Macaulay of the *Lagos Daily News*, Zik stands out as a class by himself for several reasons.

To begin with, Zik studied in the United States, where his contact with the French "Declaration of the Rights of Man" and America's 1791 Bill of Rights" and the proclamation of independence from Great Britain by the American Colonies encouraged him to fight for independence and rid Nigeria and Africa of all the vestiges of colonialism and racial inequality. Zik was also a trained journalist. While he was a university lecturer in anthropology and political science in the United States, he found time during long vacations to pursue studies in journalism in other colleges. He also worked from time to time as city reporter or sub-editor for several American provincial newspapers (Jones-Quartey, 1965: 148).

Secondly, he aroused an audience greater than others in journalism had ever done. Even Zik's arch political rivals acknowledged the impact of the Pilot on the Nigerian mass audience. Anthony Enahoro noted that:

The *West African Pilot* blossomed into every corner of the country as the champion of the common man... the teacher, the trader, the clerk... it went right to the top (Uche, 1989: 95).

Enahoro indicted the Nigerian journalism that had existed prior to Zik's arrival for having served the interests of the intelligentsia group, noting that:

... those among the poor who were so privileged to read the newspapers looked upon them as the property and mouth piece of the gods of their time. But here was a novel type of newspaper, catering to the taste of the people, even in the remotest corners of Nigeria and above all, edited by a colourful personality with all those degrees. The people fell for him (Uche, 1989: 95-96).

Zik also remained as much a journalist as a politician. Even in the greatest heat of his politics, he paid attention to the production of a good modern newspaper. The layout, the headlines, the length of sentences or paragraphs, styles of presentation, editorials and the effectiveness of the pictures among other things were given detailed attention. As Coker rightly points out, he was first a journalist and politician afterwards, unlike others before him who were politicians first and journalists later.

With its motto, "show the light and the people will find the way", the *Pilot* was for many years a venue of political consciousness and inspiration from which a continuous flood of exhortations went out to the youth of the country. It was indeed the vehicle that expressed the nationalists' sentiments that fired the movement towards eventual independence (Coker, 1968: 21).

The commercial success of the *Pilot* encouraged Zik to embark on the first newspaper chain in the country. Increase Coker records that "in the middle forties, the paper boasted a certified and audited average daily net sale of 20,000: by far the greatest in the history of the Nigerian press then.

With this success, Zik carried the excitement of newspaper production to the provinces. The firstly daily in Eastern Nigeria, *The Eastern Nigerian Guardian*, founded in Port Harcourt in 1940, was the first in this group. There were others like the *Nigerian Spokesman*, founded at Onitsha, Zik's hometown, in 1934. Zik's group also bought over Mohammed Ali's *Comet* in 1945 and four years later converted it into a daily newspaper. It was later transferred to Kano City in 1949 – and in the same year, the Zik group established the Northern Advocate in Jos (Coker, op cit).

James Coleman comments on the importance of the Zik group of newspapers in these words:

The wide circulation of the *West African Pilot*, supported by the provincial subsidiaries, was crucially significant in the spread of racial consciousness and ideas of nationalism in the interior... Nigerians throughout the country were for the first time permitted stimulation of vicarious participation in the struggle for independence (Coleman, 1966: 55).

The influence of Zik's group of newspapers can be seen in what happened during the 1945 workers' general strike in Nigeria. The *Pilot* and *Comet* were banned for thirty-six days for alleged misrepresentation of facts designed to aggravate the strike.

This early pre-independence period saw a large increase in journalistic activity. The colonial government in Lagos had responded to the outburst of political agitation and press criticism, which were flourishing in those years – by passing the first newspaper law in 1903 and the seditious offences

ordinance in 1909. This legislation was later developed and was consolidated in the criminal code of 1916 and the Newspaper Ordinance of 1917 – all significant stages in the progress of newspaper legislation in the country (Uche, 1989: 98).

Despite these measures, the press persistently claimed for itself, as others have always claimed it, that it was not only essential to democracy, but was, in fact, part and parcel of the general development of a democratic society.

Thus, the strong relationship that existed between newspapers and the nationalist movement later extended to newspapers and political parties. It is interesting to note that the three regional dominant parties that emerged before independence were all supported by newspapers. When the National Council of Nigeria and the Camerouns (NCNC) was formed in 1944, it recruited popular journalists like Herbert Macaulay who was elected as president of the party and Dutse Mohammed Ali, founder and editor of the *Comet*. Thus, this party enjoyed the support of Zik's chain of newspapers and those owned and operated by the other two journalists.

The NCNC attracted many enthusiastic followers, and as K.W.J. Post notes, "... if there was any party that could claim to be a truly national party, it was the NCNC." However, this claim was only most appropriate between 1945 and 1951 when the NCNC dominated the political scene and aroused nationalist efforts in the south and among some few northern Nigerian educated elites (Post, 1964: 54).

The supporters of the NCNC were predominantly Igbos, with a few minorities from other tribes. Indeed, the activities and solidarity of the Igbos in the NCNC "unorganised and were lacking in concerted programmes and effective leadership". This realisation led to the formation of "Egbe Omo Oduduwa", a Yoruba cultural organisation, which, translated means "society of the descendants of Oduduwa". Oduduwa is regarded as the mythical progenitor of the Yorubas. This organisation had close ties with the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) which was also predominantly Yoruba. This led to the rise of Awolowo as a leader of the Yorubas.

Chief Awolowo himself, like others before him, took to journalism to further his political ideas. Before he established the *Nigerian Tribune* in November 1949, Awolowo had been contributing to Dutse Ali's *Comet*. His subsequent political rivalry with Azikiwe was a factor in the proliferation of newspapers because both men ran newspaper chains that competed in the same market. By 1959, Awolowo, through his *Amalgamated Press* had acquired the *Daily Service* and changed its name to *Daily Express*. There was also a Sunday edition in addition to a Yoruba language newspaper also named *Iwe Irohin* based at Ibadan. Other newspapers in his chain included *The Advocate*, *Mid-West Echo* and *Eastern Observer*. Among other things, Awolowo pioneered the running of a press as a necessary adjunct to newspaper publishing. In this way, the press served as a source of revenue apart from that generated by the newspapers (Uche, op cit: 98).

Okonkwo points out that unlike its southern counterparts, the formation of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) was mainly a reaction to what he terms "imagined domination from the south". However, this statement is quite controversial because any critical scholar or observer of Nigerian historical development will agree that southern domination then was not imagined, but very real. On the other hand, the NPC spokesman argued that:

Their association was purely social and cultural and its objectives were to combat ignorance, idleness and injustice in the northern region and to maintain a "cautious friendship" with other people of Nigeria (Okonkwo, 1976: 6).

The influential editor of the government-owned Hausa newspaper, *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, Mallam Abubakar Imam and Dr. A.E.B. Dikko were the founders of the Pan-Northern cultural organisation, *Jamiyyar Jema'ar Arewa* (Northern Nigerian Congress), which later became the *Jamiyyar Mutannen Arewa* (Northern People's Congress, NPC). The NPC was declared a political party in 1951, shortly before the first elections into the new Northern House of Assembly (Best, 1996: 27).

The 1950s, which represented the terminal years of colonial rule in Nigeria, saw a further expansion in the number of newspapers published in the country. In the run-up to the 1959 independence elections, politicians and governments saw the urgent need to establish media that would advocate their own viewpoints.

2.14 THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Radio in Nigeria - Radio broadcasting came into Nigeria in 1932 when the Empire Broadcasting Service was established in Lagos and began to relay the Empire Service from Coventry, England. Soon after that, the Lagos station began to experiment with rediffusion service. The Nigeria Posts and Telegraphs Department was given the authority to work out a plan for the distribution of programmes to subscribers in Lagos, Kano and Ibadan. This was to "operate in conjunction with the Empire Broadcasting Service". In 1936, radio finally made its debut when the first Radio Distribution Service (rediffusion) was opened in Lagos as a means of distributing programmes originating from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in London as part of its overseas services (Uche, 1989: 36).

In the late 1940s through the mid-1950s, rediffusion became the principal mode of broadcasting in Nigeria; many people subscribed to the programmes. This was how rediffusion was technically developed when it was introduced in Nigeria:

The programmes in this system are distributed by landlines from the studio to various listening boxes for which the subscribers pay a small fee. Amplification is needed at some locations and was provided... by a makeshift and home built apparatus. This system caught the interest of Nigerians and was expanded to include stations at Ibadan, Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode, Calabar, Port Harcourt, Enugu, Jos, Kano, Kaduna and Zaria (Milton, 1955: 13).

The Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) was formally formed on April 1, 1951 after the Federal Government, following the Turner-Byron report, had decided to convert the major operatives into fully operative radio stations. Thus, in 1952, all the Radio Distribution Services formed the nucleus of the Federal Government Broadcasting of the NBS. The BBC, London was awarded a contract for the establishment service due to its involvement in the development of the broadcasting scheme in Nigeria since 1932. The BBC sent two of its experts who laid the foundation stone of major broadcasting in Nigeria.

It has been mentioned that the location of the NBS in Lagos was a political rather than a technical decision. Lagos was technically considered not the ideal location of NBS transmitters because the impact of the Atlantic Ocean would be so powerful that it would dissipate the signal strength of the station. The Middle Belt region, an area around Jos, Plateau State was preferred. However, Lagos was chosen because of its political clout as the federal capital (Headlines, Lagos, May, 1977: 6).

The Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) was severely attacked by the Nigerian public and press for being a government tool. The nation wanted the NBS to be impartial and to reflect divergent views and the cultural set-up of the nation. In order to restore public confidence in the services the NBS provided, a member of the Federal House of Parliament, the late Alhaji D.S. Adegbenro, after a combined lobbying with the Eastern members of the House, introduced a motion that called on the Federal Government to disband

the NBS and set up an autonomous broadcasting corporation in its place (Uche, 1989: 58).

Alhaji Adegbenro's motion received wide support. A bill to that effect was introduced on August 23, 1954. The general pattern of the debate seemed to be a Nigerian broadcasting model that was patterned after the BBC. As a parliamentarian stated then, "The intention is... to form a Nigerian broadcasting corporation on the general model of the BBC, but owing to the circumstances of Nigeria, it is proposed to have three independent regional set-ups with regional autonomy subject only to the overall control of policy by the broadcasting corporation of the whole country" (Uche, *op cit*: 58).

Finally, on April 1, 1957, the Nigerian Broadcasting Service, by an Act of Parliament, was converted into a statutory corporation to be known as Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC). The reason for this change was to shield it from government interference and the propagation of the views of the ruling political party.

The NBC was thus created to allay public fear of government monopoly of the broadcasting industry. It became a public property. The 1956 ordinance that created the NBC specifically stated the corporation's functions to include the following, among others: (a) provision of independent and impartial broadcasting services; (b) provision of services, when considered as a whole to reflect the unity of Nigeria as a federation; and at the same time give adequate expression to the culture, characteristics; affairs and opinions of the people of each region as part of the federation; (c)

provision to engage in prejudicial presentation of ministerial speeches from various political parties that seek to explain the views and policies of various political parties, speeches that express divergent views on controversial issues other than political views, and presentation of religious thought or belief within the federation; and (c) provision of educational services.

Luke Uche has observed that the greatest setback to the concept of Nigerian unity occurred when each of the then regions of the federation established its own independent broadcasting system. As he states:

One would have thought that each region would have been appeased with the establishment of NBC regional affiliates in each region. In fact the 1956 Ordinance that created the NBC also established a regional board of governors for the NBC regional affiliates. But this sort of planning would not satisfy the highly autonomous regional governments that competed with the Federal Government at all levels but in foreign and defence matters (Uche, 1989: 40).

The three regional governments' broadcasting organisations were wholly independent of the Federal Government control. The only thing they had to do that required action on the part of the Federal Government was to apply through the Federal ministry of Communications, for frequency allocation – since this was necessary so as to avoid interference with the already assigned frequencies.

The Western Region broadcasting system was the most successful among the three in commercial advertising. It had the heavily populated Lagos and Ibadan markets to exploit.

Nonetheless, the purpose of the regionalisation of the electronic media, and later the print media, was not solely for commercial reasons. The media were used as powerful political instruments for the integration of each region and cultivation of regional awareness more than national consciousness and integration. The emphasis was on regional interest rather than on the national. The politicians who established them greatly exploited them for sectional politics. When political crises occurred, these regional media became more powerful than the NBC. They were used to the fullest in protecting the political, economic, cultural and social interests of the regions.

Nigerian media experts have observed that the reason given for the emergence of regional media that were independent of any Federal Government control was dissatisfaction with the NBC. Each region felt that its own views were not properly represented by the NBC. Some accused the NBC of partiality and partisanship. Some of these allegations were both real and imagined. But still, it cannot be denied that it was the regional integration of the media with state politics that triggered off a chain of political crises in Nigeria. Ian Mackay had a little glimpse of the future when he made the following criticism of the regional set-up of the mass media, some years before major crises erupted in Nigeria:

The sole responsibility of regional broadcasting is to radiate a regional image that cannot encourage the artistic endeavours of Nigeria as a nation. The setting up of regional corporations does not bring about true competition. That can only be achieved by setting up a number of corporations having national coverage and offering a range of programmes, which would benefit the whole

country. There is no sign of that in Nigeria. Whatever the benefits – and there are benefits – the cost is too high and the danger exists that divided control in a developing society may promote regional feeling instead of encouraging the desire to live together and act together (Uche, 1989: 41).

In 1979, the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation was restructured and renamed the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN). The restructuring of the corporation was contained in the Military Decree (No. 8 of 1979). The aims and objectives of the NBC Ordinance of 1956 were maintained with adjustments and modifications here and there.

The aims of the restructuring were explained at a national seminar on the "Reorganisation of Radio Broadcasting and its Future Development" thus:

- a). The provision of efficient broadcasting services to the entire people of the Federation of Nigeria based on national objectives and aspirations and to external audiences in accordance with Nigeria's foreign policy.
- b). The provision of a professional and comprehensive coverage of Nigerian culture to promote cultural growth through research and to disseminate the results of such research works for the benefit of the public.
- c). The positive contribution to the development of the Nigerian society and to promote national unity by ensuring a balanced presentation of views from all parts of the country.
- d). To ensure the prompt delivery of accurate information to the public.

- e). To provide opportunities for the free, enlightened and responsible discussion of important issues and to provide a useful two-way contact between the public and those in authority.
- f). The provision of special broadcasting services in the field of education and in all other areas where the national policy calls for special attention.
- g). To promote orderly and meaningful development of broadcasting in the country through (a) technical improvement; (b) the training of appropriate professional staff, and (c) programme and staff exchanges.
- h). To promote research into various aspects of the communications media and their effect on the Nigerian society which will include audience research, the investigation of fresh methods of production and the true indigenisation of the broadcasting media.
- i). To make every Nigerian feel proud of being a Nigerian (*Growing up with the Nations: The First Twenty Years: 1957-1977*, Lagos: NBC, 1977: 23).

With the disbandment of regional governments and the creation of states in 1972, every state now owns a radio station to cater for local needs. There are well over fifty radio stations in Nigeria, in addition to private ones.

Radio broadcasting is the most popular medium of communication in Nigeria. Every average Nigerian has a radio set and listens to programmes of his/her choice in an average of three languages, since radio translations

depend on local dialects. It is the medium that reaches the grassroots and probably the most powerful of all communications media in Nigeria. Thus, this study on the media and democratic governance in Nigeria cannot ignore radio as an important communication channel in Nigeria.

2.15 TELEVISION IN NIGERIA

Television is, comparatively speaking, a more recent medium of communication. The idea of television broadcasting was first conceived in Europe in the early 1870s. The first complete television system was realised in Germany in 1884. Proposals for colour television were made in 1904. The 1950s to 1960s witnessed growth and success in the television industry. This growth has not subsided and today television is transmitted world-wide by satellite and viewed in all nations. Transmission is done by either VHF (very high frequency) or UHF (ultra high frequency).

The history of television broadcasting in Nigeria followed the same pattern as that of radio. It is interesting to note that while it was the Federal Government that started the first radio broadcasting in the nation, it was one of the regional governments that first ventured into television broadcasting. It was on October 31, 1959 that the former Western Region sent out the first television signal in the whole of Nigeria and indeed Africa (Uche, 1989: 61).

The Western Nigeria Television Service was established by an Act of the region's House of Assembly. Although it soon became the richest commercial television-broadcasting organisation in the entire federation, commercialisation was not the reason why it was established. The ostensible

reason was that of formal and informal education. The proponents of its establishment had argued in the Regional House of Assembly that the necessity of such a medium was its utility as an additional means of improving the regional school systems that were handicapped by the shortage of qualified teachers in certain subject areas. It was also argued that such a medium would act as a surrogate "teacher" in those understaffed schools in the region. Thus, the potential ability of television to enhance educational objective at both primary (grade) and secondary (high) school levels and adult education became the overriding factors for the establishment of the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) and Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service (WNBS).

The former Eastern Region started its own television broadcasting system in 1960. The motive for its establishment was also the need for formal and informal education. However, just like the WNTV, it also soon abandoned this objective and joined the WNTV in commercial broadcasting.

When the Federal Government wanted to start its own television project, some of its officials argued that it would be wise to save the resources by maximising the development of radio broadcasting. They also argued that television was primarily a luxury of entertainment. However, eventually, after much political rancour, the bureaucratic huddles were surmounted when the Federal Executive Council of Ministers gave the order for the final approval of the establishment of a Federal Government-owned television studio to be located in Lagos.

The American network-owned company of NBC International was contracted to build the proposed Federal Government television in Lagos. The Federal Government television was called Nigerian Television Service (NTS). When the NTS went on air in April 1962 from its location at Victoria Island, Lagos, it was jointly owned by both the Federal Government and NBC-International of America. The Federal Government signed a five-year agreement with the NBC-International which stipulated that at the expiration of the agreement, the foreign company would sell its shares to the Federal Government and it would become the sole property of the Nigerian government. Also, the agreement provided that Nigerian personnel, who would take over the management from the foreign firm at the termination of the contract, would be trained by the NBC-International before the expiration of the contract on April 1, 1967. The NTS also became integrated with the Nigeria broadcasting Corporation (NBC) when the contractual agreement with NBC-International expired in 1967.

Meanwhile, the Northern Regional Government contracted with the overseas firms of Pye Limited, and Granada TV Limited to build its own television services. It came on air in 1962, known as the Radio Television, Kaduna (RTK).

Television in Nigeria hardly fulfilled the lofty goals that its proponents had made the general public to expect. This became evident from the nature of programmes the various television stations began to transmit from 1959-1975. If television is considered a big asset in the transmission of national

cultures and ideals, they were just as big foreign transmission houses in Nigeria from 1959 to 1975.

Television broadcasting in Nigeria was increasingly becoming a big problem when the Federal Government stepped in in 1975. Before the Federal Government intervention, the industry had been plagued with many problems. The greatest of these was probably that of frequency allocation; besides its inability to produce indigenous programmes. Many stations sprang up even before the Posts and Telegraphs (P&T), the department that allocates frequencies, had knowledge of their existence. The reason for taking things for granted was that the state governments owned such stations and there was no way the P&T would deny allocation of frequencies because of the power of the states. Many of the state television stations enabled stations to be picked in neighbouring states. There was also the problem of bureaucracy among three governmental bodies – the Ministry of Communications, the division of the P&T which is under the Ministry of Communications, and the Ministry of Information. Each claimed superior jurisdiction on television broadcasting in the country. Eventually they formed a committee that was charged with seeing to the allocation of frequency, measuring of standards in television broadcasting, their contents, coverage and advertisement. However, this committee hardly accomplished anything as bureaucratic rancour hampered its effectiveness. It also became quite obvious that state governments had greater power over television broadcasting in their areas of jurisdiction.

This was the situation when the Federal Government indicated its intention to take over the management of all television stations in the nation. The government said its action had been primarily necessitated "to prevent their proliferation at the expense of the tax payers", and as a way of enabling it to "effectively participate in the country's mass media; to supplement its giant programmes on mass education". The government press release on its decision to take over all the stations in the country stated that it would like to see television "highlight the way of life of Nigerians particularly in the rural areas as against the present programmes of the television houses whereby foreign films which have no relevance to our way of life dominate their daily events" (*Daily Times*, November 10, 1975).

In 1977, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) was established as an independent body separate from the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation. The Nigerian Television Authority was established by Military Decree (No. 24 of 1977) and was instructed to:

To erect, maintain and operate television transmitting and receiving stations, to plan and co-ordinate the activities of the entire television network, to ensure an independent and impartial service which will operate in the national interest; to give adequate expression to culture, characteristics and affairs of the different parts of Nigeria" (Decree No. 24 – Nigerian Television Authority Decree, 1977: 124).

The Nigerian Television Authority had its headquarters in Lagos but has been moved to the new Federal Capital Territory, Abuja – with stations in almost all the states of the Federation. Some states in the federation also own and

operate their local television services. Private stations have been started by some individuals mainly in Lagos and in some major towns in the country.

2.16 FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN NIGERIA

It is important for us to understand what freedom of the press means – especially as it relates to Nigeria. Within the context of this work, the concept of freedom means

The right of the mass media (radio, television, newspapers, magazines, films, books etc) to communicate ideas, opinions, information, the right to criticise the political, economic and social institutions of the country; the right to help in the enlightenment of every Nigerian by providing him/her with the day's intelligence in an open market place of ideas, without any overt or covert systematic means of applying censorship, pressures or any form of inhibition on the part of both the Federal and state government institutions, organisations and individuals within the country; within the laws of libel, defamation and obscenity (Uche, 1989: 130).

Fundamental human rights and freedom are enshrined in the 1979 constitution that forms the bedrock of Nigeria's democracy. Besides, Sections 21 and 41 of the constitution that assigned undefined, abstract and ineffective supervisory role to the press over those that govern the country, the Section 36 of the constitution provides that:

Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference... Every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas and

opinions provided that no person, other than the Government of the Federation or of a State or any other person or body authorised by the President shall own, establish or operate a television or wireless broadcasting station for any purpose whatsoever (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979).

An important objective in this section is identifying those factors that have influenced freedom of the media in Nigeria. This subject is central to this study not only because of its controversial nature, but most especially because the Federal and state governments are the principal owners and financiers of the major newspapers and most, if not all, the radio and television stations. It therefore becomes imperative to find out how freedom thrives under such ownership and control patterns and particularly how the media contribute to democratic governance under these circumstances.

2.17 FACTORS DETERMINING FREEDOM OF THE MASS MEDIA

Uche Luke has identified the following factors as influencing the degree to which the media enjoy freedom in Nigeria.

2.18 TYPE OF MASS MEDIA OWNERSHIP

Media scholars and political observers have pointed out that the Nigerian media are one of the liveliest and "freest" in Africa. Thus, Nigeria has won itself the reputation of enjoying the freest media systems in the entire African continent. Even under the various military administrations, a former

chairman and managing director of a leading Nigerian newspaper, the *Daily Times*, made the following remark:

In Nigeria, the tradition of a vigorous and virile press dates back beyond the period of British colonial administration. Although the arrival of the soldiers had not advanced the cause of unfettered freedom, I am glad to say that comparatively today, throughout the length and breadth of Africa... no press enjoys the kind of freedom being currently enjoyed in Nigeria under a military regime. Even the elected government of the First Republic was not as tolerant of the press as the present benevolent military government is... It is to the eternal credit of the military in the country that there has been no press censorship – even throughout the thirty-month Civil War (Alhaji Babatunde Jose, 1975).

However, the above statement is contradicted by the following more perceptive and objective analysis of the situation, at least during the Civil War period, which the preceding assessment did make a reference to in crediting the government with permitting freedom of the press. A foreign journalist who covered the Nigerian Civil War makes the following observation:

The press on both sides of the line came out of the war of words boldly, succumbing with hardly a token resistance to the pressures exerted on it by military government... the press lost its nerve and censored itself into a state of grovelling sycophancy. This reached such a pass that it eventually upset the army commanders themselves by embarrassingly claiming military victories long before they were a fact. One of the worst but not untypical 'whitewash' examples... was by the formerly highly reputable *Daily Times*... when it reported the International Observer Team's report on the killing of four European relief workers by Federal troops in Okigwe. The deep banner headline on the front

page read: "TROOPS CLEARED ON THE OKIGWE DEATH", Lower down, the sixth paragraph had this to say: "The report, however, claimed that soldiers deliberately and without provocation by the persons concerned, shot and killed two Red Cross officials and two World Council of Churches representatives." An outstanding contradiction by any standard... The famed freedom of the Nigerian press, the liveliest and most independent in black Africa, died with the civilian rule and there is still little sign of its resurrection" (St. Jorre, 1972: 349-350).

The pattern of mass media ownership in Nigeria is inevitably related to the degree of media freedom that prevails in the country. In a country where most of the media are government-owned with a few private ones and with laws aimed at regulating them, then any freedom enjoyed by the media can only be minimal. For instance, government-owned media do not engage in certain exposition of malpractices in high government establishments if a government paid civil servant or public office holder is involved. Example is the confrontation between the late famous and controversial Afro-beat musician, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti and some Nigerian soldiers, during which soldiers burnt down the former's "Kalakuta Republic" residence; but then, no government-owned newspaper reported the incident. It was only the privately owned Punch that reported it to the general public. When the government-owned media eventually decided to join the Punch in reporting the incident, they distorted the story.

Hardly anyone in Nigeria today who is literate (except, of course, those who own the media for selfish purposes) can fail to complain against the

blatantly partisan political use of the media by those who control them with little or no regard for professional integrity. According to Alhaji Abubakar Rimi (former governor of Kano State),

The villain of the piece here are the media organs controlled by the Federal Government. Political parties other than the ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN) are often denied access to these media, a most fundamental violation of communication practice... news stories relating to them are often distorted and the impression is conveyed that these media organs are property of one political party for the castigation of political opponents (*The Sunday Triumph*, July 25, 1982: 13).

Another example often cited about how media ownership influences context is the Shugaba case. On June 15, 1982, the majority leader of the Borno State House of Assembly, Alhaji Shugaba Darmon, won a case involving his rights as a citizen of Nigeria at the Federal Court of Appeal in Kaduna. Four judges out of five dismissed the Federal Government appeal and upheld the judgement of the Maiduguri High Court declaring that Shugaba was a bona fide citizen of Nigeria (Best, 1996: 106).

In its issue of June 17, 1982, the *National Concord* reported the news under the headline: "Maiduguri Court has no Jurisdiction" in a way emphasising the minority judgement of one judge, out of five. The substance of the story about the victory of Shugaba was not given much priority.

The report of the *Daily Times* was not any better. In its issue of June 17, in headlines on the front page, the paper reported, "Shugaba loses his suit". The paper then went on to give a one-sided and totally inaccurate

version of the court's proceedings and ruling and ignored the fact that Shugaba was declared a Nigerian and was awarded fifty thousand naira as damages and seven thousand naira as cost (Best, *op cit.* 106).

The *Daily Times* later ran a front-page apology for misleading public opinion, but the damage had been done. From past experience, it is possible that such a story could have angered Shugaba's supporters and caused some violence.

The pattern of media ownership in a country is critical because the existing literature has indicated that Nigeria enjoyed the greatest free media in Africa when there were multiplicities of independently owned newspapers that existed during the pre- and post-independence era under the colonial and civilian administrations. However, an incident during a particular regime where two editorial writers of the *Daily Times* (the paper the Federal Government controls 60% of its equity) were suspended because they refused to let the government appointed censor control their editorial thoughts, shows that some Nigerian journalists were not intimidated by military rulers and insisted on their rights. They refused to show the censor the editorial they had written prior to its appearance on the paper. Moreover, the censor was considered incompetent, as he had no media expertise. It was the duty of the censor to scrutinise and approve all the contents of the paper before its publication.

Press freedom can also be impeded if the press is under the dominant monopoly of a single ownership. Frank Ugboajah made an important

observation when he noted that "the establishment of one media – voice through overall government ownership of the media is a killing of variety. Thus, the concept of development support communication seems to lend absurdity to accepted journalistic principles of the free flow of information. In Nigeria, the few cases of expose on corrupt government officials who had at one time or the other embezzled public funds and/or committed certain unethical acts in which their morality was questioned were all spearheaded by the private media. There has hardly been an occasion when a government owned newspaper has seized the initiative to expose, through investigative reporting and researching, a public figure or official for either corruption or maladministration. Since the governments of the federation control most of the media, investigative journalism will always be an endangered aspect of our developing media.

However, it is important to point out a major limitation of the press here, which is its focus on urban dwellers and neglect of the rural and disadvantaged.

The dominant philosophy of development explicitly presumed that the press would be privately owned with little or no interference from the government. This Western tradition is implicit in the hallowed principle of "freedom of the press". From a development perspective, the disadvantages are many. Since the chief purpose of a privately owned press is to produce a profit for the owners, development subjects are treated only if they are considered profitable.

The target group for newspapers is quite naturally people who are literate. These groups are better educated than the majority; most of them live in urban areas as pointed out earlier and on the whole, they enjoy better opportunities than the majority.

The newspaper content is generally designed for this audience. It has to reflect it for the newspapers to survive. Coverage of development problems has been only slight and sporadic.

Although the situation for television is different, there are obvious similarities. Many countries did not have television systems in the 1960s. Countries that invested in television soon discovered that it is an expensive medium. As soon as a television network was established, there was pressure for more programming from those who had bought receiving sets. These people are the same group that we have identified above - the already better-off residents of urban areas.

2.19 REGIME TYPE

As pointed out earlier, the nature of a regime prevailing in Nigeria at any given period constitutes an influential factor in determining the degree of media freedom. The case has already been made that greater media freedom prevailed in Nigeria during the periods of the First and Second Republics than during the military regimes. The media during a military regime often practice self-imposed censorship. Also, during the civilian administrations in Nigeria, the political system was pluralistic as opposed to

one-party political system of government. The result was that each political party, besides the Federal and state governments, had its own party press, and this led to greater freedom of the media; in most cases, what the press of one party or state tried to suppress, the press of the opposing party or state exposed it. In Nigeria, like most of other African countries, there is a great interlink between the media and the political system or regime type. For instance, the military, much more than civilian regimes, will not hesitate to invade a newspaper room to stop an editorial or any major news story it has a prior knowledge of focusing on a controversial topic the government does not like. That was the experience of the Daily Sketch and Newswatch magazine during the reign of former military leaders:

Police... raided the offices of the Government-owned Daily Sketch in Ibadan and removed an editorial intended for the next day's issue... The newspaper appeared with no editorial comment and the opinion column instead had the slogan, "Long live one Nigeria". A front-page statement said, "Readers, please pardon our slight errors". We had unexpected visitors just before going to press..." The two-hour raid was carried out by 50 plain-clothes and uniformed policemen... who demanded to see the editorial and then removed it. Three people including the night editor, were taken away but released after questioning... Police told the staff during the raid that the activities of the newspapers within the last three months had been embarrassing to the Government (Umuerr, 1991: 69).

The *Newswatch* magazine, among other media, has also had similar experience. The *Newswatch* magazine was proscribed for six months in 1987 after it published details of the Cooney Report on the Political Bureau

ahead of government's release of a white paper on it. For *Newswatch* and the press then, it had performed one of its duties in the libertarian axis, that is, to furnish the public with adequate and reliable news. Ray Ekpu, editor-in-chief of *Newswatch*, made the following remarks in an interview with *This Week* magazine:

Our decision to publish the reports was based on the need to generate more public awareness about the report and enhance public debate of the various issues in the report and thus enhance decision making on them.

The *Newswatch* was re-opened ahead of the six-month ban placed on it by the government then – thus showing that the military government did what it pleased as far as media freedom was concerned.

When some vocal elements in the media mounted a nation-wide anti-corruption campaign, a former military administrator threatened to, and did eventually, take unpleasant measures against the media. The then national police boss and commissioner of internal affairs stated that:

The press has recently mounted a campaign against the Federal Government putting pressure on it to institute an enquiry into the conduct of certain government functionaries and levelling accusations against individuals. Publishing inciting articles, books and pamphlets capable of whipping up sectional sentiments and disrupting law and order has become the order of the day. This is nothing short of blackmail. The government will not allow itself to be blackmailed by the press or stampeded into taking any action in any matter of public interest. The Federal Government will no longer tolerate press indiscipline and calculated attempts to undermine its authority. It may be forced to take drastic and

unpleasant measures to curb the excesses of the press (Uche, 1981: 136).

From 1966 to 1979, a decree proclaiming a state of emergency existed in Nigeria. The decree empowered the police and the military to arrest and detain anybody without a warrant. The result was the arrest and detention of some editors and newspaper proprietors. The military, after overthrowing the Shagari regime in 1983, reinstated Decree 2 that authorises detention without trial.

In a monolithic political system where political parties are proscribed and the tendency is to maximise the activities of the regime in power, the coverage of certain exiled political leaders by the national press is even seen as a threat to the system of maintenance of the regime in power. In May 1977, an incident occurred in Nigeria whereby national security men impounded fifty thousand copies of *Newbreed* magazine at the Murtala Mohammed Airport as the consignment was being discharged from an aircraft. The particular issue of the *Newbreed* had carried the second portion of a two-part interview with Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, the former Igbo leader during the abortive Biafran secession. The editor-in-chief of the magazine and his other two officials were asked to be reporting to the police headquarters for interrogation.

The above cases have been used to demonstrate how a political system or regime type can influence the degree of media freedom in Nigeria. The following claims can be made for now which this study sets out to prove:

(a) the degree of press freedom in a country is strongly linked to the type of administration in power; (b) in a country where there is no democratically elected government, the freedom of the media will be at its lowest ebb; (c) media freedom seems to thrive better in a pluralistic political system than in a one-party or monolithic (military) political system of government.

2.20 CO-OPTING

One of the most influential variables determining the degree of media freedom in Nigeria is co-opting. The government uses certain preferential treatments to “buy” over the most influential journalists and proprietors in the country. Different administrations in Nigeria have imprisoned journalists. The results have been unexpected backlash on the government from the outraged general public, especially if the imprisoned journalist happened to be popular. Thus, governments in Nigeria eventually adopted the policy of appointing their influential critics in the media to top posts within the government.

When this tactic started working effectively for the government, many media professionals who used to be critical of the government when its policies became questionable, softened their criticism so as to be appointed to top management posts within the regime. The following example will illustrate this point. In May 1975, a former managing director of the *Daily Times* told an international audience that “we have a benevolent military government... There is no censorship, and no journalists to the best of my knowledge are at present in prison.” Ironically, it was the same *Daily Times*

that published many statements the London-based Amnesty International sent to the Nigerian government, asking for the release of a journalist when the Gowon regime was eventually toppled in a *coup d' etat*. The new administration released the journalist in August 1975; about two months after the *Daily Times* managing director had said that no journalist was in prison in Nigeria. The released journalist used the columns of the Sunday Times (the Sunday edition of the *Daily Times*) to describe his prison ordeal thus:

In many ways my detention was unique, it was quite unique because never before in the history of our country has a mere news gatherer been selected out for what amounted to systematic destruction... I was kept in the most nefarious solitary confinement... So thorough was the police method of torture that I had thought the end was just near... Any Nigerian with human sympathy will be shocked at the indignities which are afflicted on fellow Nigerians at the Maximum Security Prison, Kiri-Kiri. As a detainee, I watched and occasionally wept how a Nigerian prison was systematically being converted into a Robin Island... it was a very nasty experience... worth passing through (Uche, 1989: 138).

The above example and many others not cited here indicate that media freedom in Nigeria is precarious if those who are supposed to be its guardians are easily attracted to join the government in helping to suppress it. Co-opting is therefore a systematic way of silencing the media as some national journalists or proprietors as the case may be vie for top government appointments by softening their criticism of bad policies of the government.

2.21 THE JUDICIARY

The Nigerian judiciary is an important and influential variable in determining the degree of media freedom. Many important cases have gone before it and some of them have set the pace in landmark decisions. One of such landmark decisions often cited is the case of FCO Coker who instituted a libel suit against the *Daily Times* and the *Nigerian Tribune* for what he described as a series of malicious articles and editorial comments against him. During the trial, the *Daily Times* claimed to have been protected by privileged reporting, and that what it published on Mr. Coker amounted to fair comment on a public official. But in his final verdict, the judge, among other things, observed that:

In matters of freedom of speech, everybody is entitled to make statements as long as they are fair. But nobody is entitled to make statements which are untrue and which are likely to lower the reputation of others in the eyes of right thinking men. I take it that in law, for the defence of fair comments to succeed, there must be sufficient cause to warrant the comments. But no fair-minded man could hold this to be so in this case. It behoves a writer to know what portions of his writing are facts and what are comments failure to exhibit this distinction carried (sic) its own risks and such a person cannot succeed by defence of fair comments (Uche, *op cit*: 139).

The judge found the comments and articles in the newspapers against Mr. Coker to be defamatory and malicious. Noting that they were libellous, and that malice had been established, he awarded about \$25,000 damages to the

plaintiff on the suit against the *Daily Times* and about \$4,000 for the plaintiff in the second suit he brought against the *Nigerian Tribune*.

Another landmark case often cited is one involving a correspondent of the *Nigerian Observer* – Mineri Amakiri. He reported a dispute between the Rivers State Union of Teachers and the State Ministry of Education. And because the article appeared on the birthday of the Military Governor of the state, Alfred Diете-Spiff, the reporter was arrested, flogged and had his hair and beard shaved. The reporter was hospitalised because of the brutality meted on him and on his release, instituted a court action. The verdict was astonishing. He won the case and was compensated for the damages.

The Nigerian judiciary often displays fairness and justice and acts as the "football umpire" (referee) among the press, the government and the people of Nigeria. In some of its decisions, the excesses of irresponsible journalism have been checked. It has often protected the freedom of the newsmen to report without any threat to their lives. However, there have been instances where some court rulings had been overturned by the military regimes when such rulings did not favour the latter. In some instances, some military regimes have had to make sure that they appointed the judges/justices they were certain would rule in their favour when a controversial issue came before them.

2.22 OTHER RELATED FACTORS

Following are other factors that influence the degree of freedom of the mass media in Nigeria:-

2.23 PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY

The problem of developing a socially responsible press is one of those variables undermining the issue of media freedom in Nigeria. Many Nigerian journalists do not understand that the power to disseminate and control the flow of information to a heterogeneous audience entails a high degree of responsibility and maturity. Some do not even know that the power of the media could spell the doom of someone's career. To some, to be a journalist is a license and privilege above all others.

There are several other instances when the Nigerian media have either consciously or unconsciously engaged in reporting that lacked professional discipline. In fact, some of the most inimical laws inhibiting the freedom of the mass media in Nigeria were enacted to check the irresponsibility of mass media practitioners in the country. The origin of the Public Officers (Protection Against False Accusation) Degree of 1976 and its version of Decree No. 4 of 1984 were the aftermath of the Ohonbamu trial and The Guardian's prior publication of a list of ambassadors. The accused, late Ohonbamu, a senior lecturer in law at the University of Lagos and also the publisher of a magazine – African Spark – had accused a former head of state, prior to the latter's death, of corruption and acquisition of ill-gotten wealth in his magazine.

Ohonbamu was consequently charged with sedition against the state of Nigeria for publishing what was "likely to cause fear and alarm to the public knowing or having reason to believe that such a statement is false" (*Daily Times*, November 8, 1975: 1).

Towards the end of the trial, Ohonbamu pleaded guilty. He was verbally reprimanded and set free. But a few days later, the Federal Government promulgated the Public Officers Protection Decree Against False Accusation.

Rather than being professionally responsible, some Nigerian journalists and publishers believe that they can attack anyone, including the government and under the cloak of journalism and freedom of the media, without bothering to confirm the facts of their allegation.

There are several other instances when the Nigerian media have either consciously or unconsciously engaged in irresponsible reporting that lacked professional discipline. The result of this has been the promulgation and enactment of laws that have reduced the segments of the media to mere public relations bulletins and official government news releases. This has affected the freedom of the media. Thus, unethical conduct and lack of professional responsibility form a variable that threatens media freedom.

2.24 MEDIA EXPERTISE

The problem of professional responsibility is related to the degree of media expertise. No one can become a medical doctor or a lawyer without

the formal education, which, among other things, teaches ethics, responsibility and expert knowledge in the profession. However, one can become a publisher and journalist without going to the university or any other institution of higher learning for a formal education in the profession. It is this deficiency in formal education in the profession of journalism in Nigeria that has led to difficulties in the resolution of conflicts (Uche, 1989: 142-143).

However, cultural heterogeneity can also be seen as a double-edged sword. For instance, during the First Republic, local government council areas in the former Eastern Region banned the circulation of certain newspapers from Lagos and the Western Region in their areas of jurisdiction during the 1965 political crises in the Western Region. In retaliation, the Western Regional government also banned some newspapers from the East and Lagos and forbade its citizens from listening to radio ENBS, Enugu. Such actions, unfortunately, do not promote the freedom of the media in any democratic society, no matter how pluralistic.

However, despite this shortcoming, the orientation of both the Nigerian media and society make it hard for a dictator to emerge. The media of various states act as a sort of "watchdog" over the developments of events in each state of the federation.

2.25 CULTURAL HETEROGENEITY

Media scholars and others have pointed out that it is the diversity of autonomous cultures within the Nigerian society that has promoted the relative degree of media freedom that exists in the nation. The heterogeneity

of this culture is undoubtedly one of the leading factors that promote media freedom. The degree of competition and diversity in value systems within the various cultures in the nation is very high. Despite what may be described as systematic government ownership of the media, these media still reflect the cultures and interests of their geographical locations. Ugboajah had correctly observed that “cultural plurality in the Nigerian society acts as a stop-gap in attempts towards media control by the government. This also helps to bring sanity and compromise. Pluralism makes it possible for another state’s media to disclose the hidden facts of another state”.

2.26 LITERACY

The concept of freedom of the media can only take root in Nigeria if the literacy rate increases. The high rate of illiteracy (about 57%) is such that only a small minority of the population reads newspapers and attends to other media. Some previous administrations have had to defend their clampdown on newspapers based on mass illiteracy. Literacy therefore constitutes an important variable if mass media freedom is to take place in Nigeria. It is inevitable that once people are able to read and write, they will understand and assess their rights, and this would invariably promote the freedom of the media

2.27 RELATED WORKS

To further understand the issues involved in our study, it is pertinent to examine the related works on the topic.

Indeed, there is a growing body of literature dealing with the influence of the media in Nigeria. For instance, early works in the area such as James Coleman's *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, focused on the social and historical factors that contributed to the rise of Nigerian nationalism. While discussing some of these factors, Coleman dealt with the part played by the press.

Most observers agree that the history of the early Nigerian print media or press is almost synonymous with independence, because the press became an avenue through which the nationalists came to express their beliefs and achieve their objectives. Coleman points out that:

African owned newspapers and presses were the media through which nationalists' ideas of educated Africans found an outlet; they were partly responsible for the ever-growing number of Nigerians predisposed to a nationalist ideology. There is little doubt that nationalist newspapers and pamphlets have been among the main influences in the awakening of racial and political consciousness (Ezera, 1964: 4).

Fred Omu's *The Nigerian Newspaper Press: A Study in Origins, Growth and Influence* is one of the first detailed and authoritative studies on this topic. Omu's emphasis here is not only on the influence of the press in the struggle for independence, but also their role in shaping public opinion and on the nature of the problems which press freedom raised (Omu, 1966: 38). Although his period of study ends in 1937, before the Second World War – which increased the need for self-rule and political development in Nigeria – his work generally provides a rich background of information for this study. As

important as this study is, it is still limited because it fails to provide adequate information about the media throughout Nigeria.

Other studies by scholars like William Hachten, Increase Coker, R.M. East, Lloyd Murphy, Luke Uche and Dayo Duyile, among others, are also worth mentioning here.

Hachten's *Muffled Drums: The News Media in Africa* (1971) is both a study and a survey of media facilities, news flow, foreign correspondents, international political communication and technical needs. It also includes a series of case studies of the press in several African countries, including Nigeria. Generally speaking, his work provides some great insights into the development of the media generally in Nigeria.

R.M. East's contribution about the activities of the Literature Bureau in northern Nigeria describes the role and influence of the Hausa language newspaper, *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* (truth is worth more than a penny). East points out that:

Gaskiya is, in fact, becoming a forum for the discussion of every kind of subject and many interesting suggestions have been received on such burning questions as debt amongst Native Administrative officials, the treatment of prisoners, new crafts, titles, the shortage of salt, medicines, corruption of modern youth, and many other topics about which the public obviously feels strongly (R.M. East, cited in Best, 1996: 67).

According to East, the paper is having, and will continue to have, a strong influence on the moulding of public opinion amongst members of the Hausa-speaking audience.

Although essentially about the Nigerian federal elections of 1959, Ken Posts' book discusses, in a section, the role of the nationalist newspapers as principal channels for political ideas. His discussion is brief but significant because of the important role the newspapers played in the different regions in the country.

Landmark of the Nigerian Press by Increase Coker is another significant contribution to the literature of the media in Nigeria. Coker provides one of the first detailed studies about the press throughout Nigeria. He discusses the beginnings of newspapers in the regions and also has a section about the pioneer journalist in northern Nigeria – Mallam Abubakar Imam. Also, pertinent to this study are four dissertation abstracts by Lars Holman Hyde (1972), Pweddon Nicholas (1977), Ibrahim Jibrin (1983) and Bala Mohammed (1998).

Hyde's dissertation traces the origins of the Nigerian press as the voice of the African intelligentsia from 1919 through its development into the political platform. His study ends in 1966, and gives the first detailed work in the post-independence period. He also shows how the press had now moved into conflict with the new civilian regime which had become very sensitive to criticism.

Okonkwo's study on *The Press and Nigerian Nationalism 1859-1960* examines the role of all the nationalists published in Nigeria from the beginning of Nigerian journalism to independence. Although a very useful study, its broad perspective cannot help having some limitations. For

example, the *West African Pilot* and other newspapers which played key roles in Nigerian nationalism are given short and brief treatment. Okonkwo almost completely ignores any newspaper from the northern parts of the country and one is left to wonder if any newspaper from that region played a role in the nationalists' movement.

Pweddon Nicholas's thesis about *Thematic Conflict and Narrative Technique in Abubakar Imam's Ruwan Bagaja* has a section about the prolific journalist – Abubakar Imam (the first Nigerian editor of *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*). Pweddon's work on Imam offers great insights about the beginnings and role of the print media in Northern Nigeria that are found in a few places.

Ibrahim Jibrin's thesis (1983) *Towards a Political Economy of Mass Communication in Nigeria* investigates the role and character of mass communication in a neo-colonial capitalist system. His focus is on the agencies of mass communication, that is, the mass media, such as newspapers, radio, television, films, etc. In the literature, two perspectives are explored. On the one hand, the liberal viewpoint of their role and character being one of informing and educating the public on the central issues concerning the society, the major and minor events unfolding in society and the provision of entertainment. The Marxian political economy approach on the other hand asserts that the mass media in capitalist society is simply an organ which the ruling class uses for the propaganda purposes of distorting reality to make the capitalist system look like the best one, as well as fighting its antithesis – socialism. Thus, Jibrin's thesis studies the Nigerian mass

media within the context of the two opposing approaches and concludes that the Marxian political economy or the science of historical materialism provides the best approach to the study of mass communication and other social processes.

Bala Mohammed's (1998) dissertation examines the theory of hegemony and documents the use of the press by the state during the General Ibrahim Babangida's tenure. He contends that it was the ability of the Babangida administration to foster a high degree of cohesion among various strata of the bourgeoisie that was responsible for the initial legitimisation of the administration. Under General Babangida as much as his predecessor, General Buhari, the military held and used power to continue building up an existing authoritarian state form established through years of military rule on behalf of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. And, authoritarianism, by its very nature and logic, is demarcated by the concentration, indeed monopolisation of power in the head of state (or president as in the case of General Babangida) or the chief of general staff, kin, friends and associates and the concomitant access to state resources by the same group and a large scale of corruption. All these combined to result, in heightened competition for political power among contending groups within the bourgeoisie thereby exacerbating political instability in the polity.

In *Newswatch's* "Who's Afraid of Press?" (Cover story of September 19, 1988), the magazine captures the experiences of the government and society. It then concludes that the press is indeed an influential agency in

government and society. It is in response to the significant role of the media as a watchdog that it has largely received opposition from those it throws its searchlight on. Also, it is indicative of the various events or issues that the press has had to contend with.

Emeka Omeruah, former Anambra State Military Governor and one time information minister, argued that the Nigerian media is too unbound and hence prone to mischief. He said the press could now be associated with what he called "the bring-down (of government) syndrome" (Omotunde Soji, 1987). On the other divide, journalists countered this charge by claiming that the press is free only to the extent that Nigerians themselves are free – and that the freedom enjoyed by the press is not enough to counter the various constraints hampering its effective performance. The different reactions by both sides attest to the fact that the media do wield some influence.

The *Newswatch* story also examines the harassment of journalists by security agents. A close example is the case of Chris Okolie – publisher/editor-in-chief of *Newbreed* magazine and his editor, Ishmael Raheem. In 1988, according to Raheem, persons suspected to be security agents approached him and gave him a three-week ultimatum to quit his job at *Newbreed*. Okolie also revealed that security agents not only routinely interrogated him, but also alleged that he was "... involved in gun-running and other nefarious activities" (Umuerrri, 1991: 38).

When journalists are routinely interrogated, it shows that issues they are bringing to light do not meet with governments' expectation. The July 3,

1988 edition of *Newbreed* carried a cover titled "Nigeria's biggest hemp farm uncovered in the barracks". According to the *Newbreed* story, the directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) had written Okolie on June 28, commending him on his magazine's story. Even though the *Newbreed* publisher did not give specific reasons why his organisation was routinely under intelligence scrutiny and assault, it is sufficient to point out that the July 3 edition of the magazine was not well received by some military officers – the letter of commendation notwithstanding. The military is supposed to be an epitome of discipline, but the *Newbreed* story painted the army in a conflicting and contradictory light, thus giving them a poor image in the public's eye.

Newbreed was banned in 1978 by the Obasanjo military government because of stories published in the magazine which were considered inimical to state security. The publications, which caused the ban on the magazine, then, were "The drift begins", which government thought deprecated the military regime. Another was "The uses and abuses of National Security Organisation" (NSO), which analysed its utility value under the government. Okolie's *Newbreed* organisation and other segments of the Nigerian media which have continuously been harassed by the security agents, must have taken after the brand of journalism recommended by the late Obafemi Awolowo – as contained in an address he made to the Western Nigeria branch of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) in Ibadan (June 4, 1958); nine years after, he established *Tribune*. He had this to say:

To disseminate news accurately and to criticise pungently and demand that the press should

possess sufficient courage and impartiality to play a role which may please some and displease others. There are those who would like to have certain news suppressed which in the interest of the public should be given the widest publicity... The truth should be told always and charlatans and saints should be called by their proper names (Uche, 1989: 112).

The *Newbreed* story also discussed the need or not for constitutional provision for press freedom. The government felt that a specific constitutional guarantee for a free press would turn journalists into *super-citizens* with a license to *kill* with their pens. It was in this light that President Babangida, in an inaugural address to the Constituent Assembly (September 7, 1987), said:

That the nation is committed to the freedom of the press is undeniably a good and imperative thing. That no institution should be guaranteed freedom not guaranteed the people is an irreducible principle of all constitutions (*Newswatch*).

According to the *Newswatch* story, the NUJ and the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN) pressed for a clear-cut, unambiguous provision for press freedom in the new constitution, as it was being put together in 1988. Arguing its case further before the Assembly Committee on Fundamental Human Rights, which wanted to know how the press would use the freedom it is asking for, NUJ officials then saw the concern as legitimate and argued that sanctions should be used to check journalists from abusing the freedom.

However, when the revised constitution came into being in 1989, no specific provision for press freedom was enshrined in it. Thus, the media lost

out in its battle for *absolute freedom*. Nonetheless, part of the fear of the press has always been to guard and protect it against government officials, who routinely use security agents to harass it. However, journalists contend that if the press lost out in its battle to enshrine press freedom in the constitution, it is not because of its complacency.

Attention has also been drawn to the number of restrictive laws clamped on the media. These include, the Newspaper Amendment Act 1964, the Official Secret Act of 1962, the Law of Sedition and Law of Obscenity. In 1984, the Buhari regime promulgated decree number one which suspended crucial parts of the constitution. And also decree number two which gave immunity against litigation which made it an offence for the press to publish even the truth about a public officials, so long as the report is deemed embarrassing.

No doubt, these laws have had a telling effect on the media. For instance, late Dele Giwa, an editor of the *Sunday Concord*, was detained under the official secrets act of 1962 for publishing the judicial report on the 1981 Republic House fire incident. However, he challenged his detention in court and won.

Most of these laws were unfortunately inherited from the colonial era, but with little amendments to ease the effect they had on the practice of journalism during the independence struggle. When such laws are used to clobber the media and society, governments are the worst for it, since what may be called a temporary state of anarchy now takes place; instead of actual

societal stability and empowerment of people for development. It was this kind of situation that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first premier, had in mind when he stated that:

I would rather have a completely free press with all the dangers involved in the wrong use of freedom than a suppressed or regulated press (*Newswatch*, September 19, 1988).

In conclusion, the *Newswatch* cover story (September 19, 1988) was an indirect indictment of different Nigerian governments and their attitude to the media. The military regimes especially charted a number of restrictive media laws and fell short of meeting the yearnings and aspirations of the vast majority of the Nigerian people who look up to the media as a means of liberation and empowerment.

Duyile's *Makers of the Nigerian Press* portrays the influence and effects of the Nigerian press on society. He attests to the fact that even before independence, the Nigerian press has remained vibrant, thus having a significant impact on the Nigerian society. Duyile examines the role of the early Nigerian penny press in the country's socio-political and economic settings. He notes that even though the Nigerian penny press had a fragile economic base, they were bold, articulate and politically active. They were quite bold in the expressions of organised educated Nigerian opinion. Most of the proprietors then had no profit motive and all their efforts were geared towards political agitation and education for its readers.

Duyile also gives five reasons why many publishers set up newspapers. The first reason is that publishers do so to acquire fame and political power. Secondly, to make profit as any other business enterprise. Thirdly, to help them provide a base for influencing political authority. And lastly, it could be a combination of some or all of the above reasons.

One can hardly fault any of the five reasons adduced in Duyile's text. This is because facts on the ground today portray some of these indices in the Nigerian press. For instance, Alex Ibru set up *The Guardian* newspapers (Nigeria) not only for altruistic and profit motives, but also to influence public opinion, thus creating opportunity for influencing political authority. For, as he said at the debut of *The Guardian* February 27, 1983,

The Guardian newspapers were established to serve the people and to enable journalists to practice their trade without hindrance.

In summary, Duyile's review of the Nigerian media looks at the effects of the media content on the Nigerian audience. He notes that as channels of communication, the effects of these media are indeed significant. Newspapers generally produced material that aided political education and empowerment. There has been what may be called a trickle-down effect with the elites getting enlightenment from media reports and passing it down to their kith and kin in the rural areas. The result has been what may be regarded as some level of political empowerment with the coming together of rural groups to form associations that articulate their political stance and advocate justice and fair play in things that concern them.

This Week magazine's cover story of April 12, 1987, titled "Nigeria's New Journalism: The Risks and the Thrills of a Press Reborn", discusses the new trends in journalism which have had significant influence on the society. The article chronicled the evolvement of different new publications of the 1980s and notes that some of the best professional brains enriched by top hands from other disciplines and the academia joined the media and greatly affected output. Just as Okonkwo rightly notes, "... the standard of writing is high and issues are well discussed..." (*This Week*, April 17, 1987).

A good example often cited is the case of The Guardian newspapers – established in 1983. The Guardian group brought a new flare to the impressive number of intellectuals who left the universities to join the editorial board of the Guardian Newspapers, other newspapers have since followed suit. The result of this has been that these crops of academia have brought their depth and knowledge of the Nigerian society to reflect on the editorial content and general outlook of these newspapers. Government and the society at large are now forced to take these newspapers and their views more seriously, especially when they focus on the social, political, religious and economic issues that affect the nation.

Luke Uka Uche's *Mass Media, Peoples and Politics in Nigeria: A Landmark Study*, is a book that brings to the fore the precarious predicament of the mass media in a country whose political culture is characterised by divergent and powerful interest groups with insatiable political and economic demands on the larger political entity. Uche's book demonstrates how

Nigeria's development as a nation-state has similarly influenced the way and manner of the organisation, administration and contents of her mass media system.

However, a major problem in this and similar books, as the author points out in the preface, is the mercurial nature of the mass media in Nigeria. Many things take place in quick succession, with the result that a researcher's data are easily rendered obsolete.

From the literature reviewed above, it is clear that the influence of the Nigerian media on the society generally has not diminished over the years. However, the important question in our study is, have the media promoted democratic governance and empowered the people?

2.28 TOWARDS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The fact that there is no identifiable body of principles and concepts that can be conveniently labelled as "mass communications theory" makes the task of constructing a theoretical framework problematic. One only has to recognise that human systems comprise a complex array of communication processes operating within and between a hierarchy of levels from interpersonal to the inter-institutional to understand why it is that analyses of these processes have spanned such a broad disciplinary and methodological spectrum (Parlour, J., 1980: 110). Parlour and other scholars have rightly pointed out that information theory, cybernetics, psychology, sociology and political science have all contributed concepts; theories and perspectives to

the analysis, and the methodologies employed have ranged from the "hard" concrete approaches of information theory and cybernetics to the "soft" more abstract approaches of sociology and political science. At the "hard" end of the methodological spectrum, information theory developed by Claude Shannon and Cybernetics by N. Wiener provide us with mathematical models of information transfer in closed quantitatively defined systems (C. E. Shannon and W. Weaver, 1949).

This study leans more to the contribution by sociology and political science in developing our theoretical framework.

The following section will focus on two theoretical perspectives about the political role of the mass media in society. One deals historically with the conception of the media in a liberal democratic society as organisations which through their ability to scrutinise the government elites and their provision of information for the electorate are able to act as a "fourth estate". Counterposed to this view is what might be called the sanctioned media model which views the media as an appendage or apparatus of the state or of commercial interests and thus, largely geared to the needs and interests of those dominant groups.

These positions can be separated into camps which employ either a liberal-democratic world view or a class-based Marxist analysis. One sees the media as a means by which political institutions are held responsible; the other sees the media as a means by which these institutions sustain an

irresponsible position by legitimating the position of the dominant groups within public consciousness.

2.29 THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC VIEW

Models of political communication are usually composed of three basic elements, namely,

- (a) Political actors;
- (b) The electorate; and
- (c) The institutions through which messages are transmitted (of which the media are the most prominent example).

According to Tracey (1978), the flow of information is seen as moving from A the political actors to B the electorate via C the media institutions, though the media also create information themselves by casting a critical eye over the operation of government. This is the watchdog role so aptly described by Seymour Ure in the context of the print media. Likening the press to a pressure group, which has the ability to enforce certain sanctions, he states that "the sanction of a newspaper is the power to publish what a party or government wants to keep private; which is ultimately connected to an estimate of electoral advantage" (1968: 304).

Thus, the criteria for judging a healthy media in this view is not the sheer number of press outlets or points of view, etc, but whether the existing press is able to carry out fully and efficiently this watchdog role. Because of the nature of broadcast journalism, its precise role has been a subject of

debate. Should the broadcast journalist function as a mouthpiece for the state? The neutral purveyor of someone else's information, as a source of non-partisan comment and criticism or as an overtly partisan editorial writer? (Blumler, 1970).

The proposition offered by Blumler is that British television (TV), which is generally representative of TV in developed western societies, has moved "from the more subdued second function, which predominated in the 1950s towards an enthusiastic application of the third in the 1960s" (1970: 72). Referring to his own work in the 1966 election, Blumler argues that the broadcast media in Britain, having emerged from the dark age of Reithian paternalism, have actually begin to incorporate certain functions that attach to the role of the press in a liberal democracy – not only the transmission of the information with which the electorate can begin to make decisions, but also the establishment of a critical presence within the political process. Thus, four decades after its own birth and about a century after the print media, the broadcast media gained membership of the fourth estate (Tracey, 1978).

Before going any further, it is important to understand what is the fourth estate and what is this theory of the press? And how does it apply to any discussion on the nature of media and government relations.

Mid-Century liberal consensus and the origins of a theory of the press

In considering the substance of the theory, which underpins certain concepts of the role of the press in modern political culture, one has to

understand that there was an evolution from authoritarian, to libertarian, to social responsibility and more recently other developmental theories.

These theories have been among the dominant theoretical perspectives or models that have been very useful in analysing the role of the media in society. The four theories of the press, as formulated by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm (1963), have four prototypes. The first prototype, the authoritarian theory of the press, posits that government has a monopoly of wisdom and it only knows the truth. The press is supposed to serve the purpose of the government, or that of the powers that be, and shall do so at the pleasure of those in authority who shall grant them license, and withdraw it when the press is not doing their bidding.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' radical transformation of man's view of man, the emergence of rationalism, the development of the middle classes and the preponderance of market forces, the attribution of significance to the individual per se and his possession of natural rights, with the refocusing from the deity onto the laity; laid the ground for the emergence of a press liberated from the authoritarian attachment to the state. "By the end of the eighteenth century, libertarian principles were enshrined in the fundamental law of the land, in constitutional phrases protecting freedom of speech and of the press" (Siebert, 1956: 44).

The vision embodied in the work of John Milton, John Erskine, Thomas Jefferson and John Stuart Mill – a developmental image spanning three centuries – was of a society of rational men, engaged in the pursuit of truth

(Siebert, 1956). Since a rational decision was deemed to require information upon which to dwell before arrival at that decision, particular unpolluted sources of information became crucial. The first purpose of the press thus became "the provision of information; basically, the underlying purpose of the media was to help discover truth; to assist in the process of solving political and social problems by presenting all manner of evidence and opinion as the basis for decision-making. The essential characteristic of this process was its freedom from government control and domination" (Siebert, 1956: 51).

Thus, while one view would see the emergence of the press as dependent on the fact that it served the specific interests of the urban middle-class, the tendency is also to view the emergence as the fruition of the actual desirability of a free press.

According to Siebert, the purpose of the press was, and still is, to "discover truth", while others might add, "to also discover the state of business and the latest share prices" (Siebert, op cit).

The immediate problem, however, is how one could guarantee the 'truth' of the information provided. The solution was seen to lie in the inescapable logic of the self-righting mechanism of the free marketplace of ideas. Jefferson also articulated the point thus: "the discernment they have manifested between truth and falsehood shows that they may safely be trusted to hear everything true and false and to form a correct judgement between them" (quoted in Smith, 1973: 36).

Thus, in the free marketplace of ideas – always assuming that any individual who so wished had the facilities with which to market his ideas – truth would drive out falsehood. In this situation, the press could not only be the purveyor of information about government, but could also act as a watchdog on the government.

With the development in the nineteenth century of a British government system which emphasised the accountability of government and its attendant institutions to the people, with advances in education and increased awareness of and activity in political affairs, the press was lauded as a central institution in the political process. Through its ability to transform the complexities of government to the average people, the press was seen as an ideal means of communication between electors and their representatives, enabling the former to arrive at rational decisions in choosing between rival claimants to being the latter (Tracey, 1978). It was only a short step from the press enabling the electorate to hold the government to account, to its holding the government to account itself by seeking out corruption and attacking abuses of power. Thus, in this full-blooded conception of the fourth estate, the press was not only a broker of information, but also potentially a breaker of governments.

The above discourse has given a brief summation of one view of the historical development of the libertarian press. The nineteenth century brought changes in the political and socio-economic structure of those

European societies. The fundamental principles of a libertarian press, even as the press was apparently achieving its rightful place in the political process.

Carey (1969) argues that one witnessed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the American news media what might be described as the *rebrokerisation* of the press. Arising from what he describes as a "fetishism of objectivity" which itself derived from the need for the news agencies to serve an ideologically heterogeneous readership, it led to the assumption that the highest standard of professional performance occurred when the reporter presented the reader with all sides of an issue (though there were usually only two) – presented all the "facts and allowed the reader to decide what these facts meant" (Carey, 1969: 32-33). The press in this view became a passive link in a communications chain, and not, as the theory of the press so far outlined would have had it, as an active watchdog, a constituent of the fourth estate.

As other scholars have rightly pointed out, the difficulty and inherent danger in this development would clearly be that in abandoning its interpretative and critical role in transmitting "untouched" information from society, the press would reproduce that information in all its confusion and contradiction. This would in itself rest on a development in the dominant view of the audience, since, as we have seen, libertarian theory rested on the premise of the individual's capacity to detect truth from falsehood (Tracey, 1978).

The idea of a libertarian theory of the press suffered further setback with the incorporation of broadcasting within its ambit in the early decades of the twentieth century. The theory had assumed the existence and availability of numerous outlets, and yet here was a new medium, the central characteristics of which was that it was physically impossible, given available technologies, to have numerous outlets. Every broadcasting organisation therefore had built into the principles upon which it was established a clear element of state control, the very antithesis of the then dominant libertarian theory of the press. As Smith (1973: 45) points out, the emergence of broadcasting was a midwife to what became known as the social responsibility theory of the press.

Among other factors, the economic logic of the libertarian theory – that outlets were available to all who wished to possess them – became patently nonsensical in the face of the immense costs involved in publishing. Thus, the concentration of the press into fewer and fewer units, the increasing criticism of the press role in society as that concentration increased, the undermining of rationalist assumptions of man, the challenge of the efficacy of the free marketplace of ideas all served to challenge the foundations on which the old theory had rested. Moreover, it was noted that nowhere in libertarian theory was the public accorded a right to receive information. In response to such challenges, the press began to express a commitment to the general welfare and to express a responsibility to their audience (Peterson, 1956: 83).

2.30 THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY THEORY

Theodore Peterson (1956: 75) described the social responsibility theory as "largely a grafting of new ideas onto traditional theory". He was making the point that social responsibility accepted libertarian view that the press services the political system with information, discussion and debate; that it should enlighten the public and therefore encourage self-government, act as a watchdog of government, facilitate commerce through the use of advertising, entertain and be financially self-sufficient. However, what the emerging view did not accept was that the press actually performed those roles. The theory of a socially responsible press received its clearest articulation in the Commission on the Freedom of the Press in the United States, which published some reports in 1947 and in Britain by the Royal Commission on the Press, which sat from 1947-1949. The implication of the movement from libertarian to social responsibility concepts was that "press freedom was a freedom to provide a certain kind of service to society, it retained no freedom to please itself (Smith, 1973: 45). The canons of journalism adopted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1923 called on newspapers to practice responsibility to the general welfare, sincerity, truthfulness, partiality, fair play, decency and respect for the individual's privacy" (Peterson, 1956: 85). The emergence of this theory and the codes of practice, which it entailed reflected a developing view that man was far from rational, but was in fact immature and irrational. It is important to

list the five requirements, which the commission on the freedom of the press saw embodied in the social responsibility theory:

- i). That the press should provide a truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in the context, which gives them meaning.
- ii). The press should serve as "a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism".
- iii). It should project a representative picture of the constituent groups in society.
- iv). It should be responsible for "the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society".
- v). It should have full access to the day's intelligence.

This, then, is the articulation of a guiding framework within which the press should function. While it was still felt that the press retained its independence from the state, the concept of freedom implied in this autonomy subtly changed. Peterson describes the position: "Libertarian theory was born of a concept of negative liberty which was defined loosely as *freedom from*, and more precisely as *freedom from external restraint*." The social responsibility theory, on the contrary, rests on a concept of positive liberty, "freedom for, which calls for the presence of the necessary implements for the attainment of a desired goal" (Peterson, 1956: 93). Whereas in libertarian theory, under no circumstances should the state intervene in the affairs of the press, social responsibility theory holds a view that the state must not only allow freedom, but must actually promote it.

“Government”, Hocking, in the Hocking’s Commission tells us, “remains the residuary legatee of responsibility for an adequate press performance” (Hocking, 1947).

Broadcasting, especially television, became a prime exemplification of the social responsibility theory because it appeared too powerful, too scarce a resource to be allowed to operate completely unfettered and *irresponsible*. Thus, a catalogue of guidelines was laid down – to educate, inform, entertain, be impartial, balanced, objective, act in public service, be fair and operate codes on taste and violence. Nonetheless, great pains were made to create broadcasting systems, which visibly functioned beyond the control of governments. The argument of the Commission was that the press must know that its faults and errors have ceased to be private vagaries and have become public dangers. Its inadequacies menace the balance of public opinion. It has lost the common and ancient liberty to be deficient in its functions or to offer half-truths for the whole (Tracey, 1978: 25).

Donald Edwards (1962: 12) has observed that “if broadcasting is to reflect the nation, we must include matters in dispute. We must communicate the views of others, however distasteful or embarrassing they may be to some. This is our duty as honest reporters. The public is entitled to the truth as interpreted by all sides – and so on behalf of the public we put probing, searching questions to ministers, railway chiefs, industrial bosses – “all of them who push us around”. The public have not the opportunity of putting these questions themselves. We do it for them.” This is an example of the

"accountability" function referred to by Blumler (1970) and is also a clear exposition of the requirement of the press as outlined by the Hocking's Commission.

In Seymour-Ure's illuminating study on the press (1968), he argues that of the various functions, which the press can fulfil, the most important is the question "whether the newspapers we have are properly equipped to assemble, interpret and criticise information about politics and government" (1968: 30). It is in this way that the press is able to sustain the democratic basis of a nation's political life.

The only real problem, which the press faces in this view is whether it is suitably equipped for its role, which is sometimes presented as analogous to that of the opposition in the House of Assembly or Parliament. The structure of Seymour-Ure's argument is that the press fulfil the role assigned to it by the social responsibility theory of the press – as the watchdog of the democratic process.

2.31 THE VIEW FROM THE MARXIST CRITICAL TRADITION – THE 'COLONISATION' OF THE FOURTH ESTATE

By controlling every major opinion moulding institution in the country, members of the upper class play a predominant role in determining the framework within which decisions on important issues are reached (Domhoff, 1967: 83).

This view emphasises a very different perspective of the historical development of the press. Indeed, the Marxist analysis is gaining increasing

influence on mass communication research (Curran, *et al*, 1982). Its tendency is to dismiss empirical communication research as being disabled in its theoretical approach since it does not take into account of the viewpoint that the media are ideological agencies that play a central role in maintaining class domination.

In Gurevitch *et al* (1982), the division between liberal and Marxist views of the media are summarised as follows:

- i). Capitalist society is one of class domination.
- ii). Various class views are fought in the media within the context of the domination by certain classes.
- iii). Ultimate media control is concentrated in monopoly capital.
- iv). Autonomy of media professionals is illusory since they are socialised into the norms of domination.
- v). The media therefore relay interpretative frameworks consonant with the interests of the dominant classes.
- iv). While media audiences may negotiate and contest these frameworks, they lack access to alternative meaning systems and are therefore unable to reject definitions offered by the media.

Thus, this view contends that the social structures of western society are heavily stratified, with the unequal distribution of power and wealth between the different strata. In such a society, order may be maintained through the use of force, but as Rex (1974: 213) notes, the use of bullets and prisons has on the whole not been seen as a necessary element in British capitalism.

Tracey (1978: 30) points out that implicit in the observation above is that those societies in which the mass media are both most visible and discussed are characterised by a high level of agreement as to *legitimate* values, even though the structure of rewards according to available evidence is manifestly unequal. Thus, the dominant orders need not exercise their institutional power to sustain their dominance since they rule with the acquiescence of the lower orders. By extension, it is argued that the ideas of the ruling class are always in any age the ruling ideas – and our age is no exception – not because of any rational convergence at a point of mutual agreement by two different classes (or elite, non-elite) nor because of the persistent use of force, but rather because one class – elite, through its command of power and privilege – will be in a position to legitimate its world view. Hence, “those groups in society which occupy positions of the greatest power and privilege will also tend to have the greatest access to the means of the legitimation. That is to say, the social and political definitions of those in dominant positions tend to become objectified and enshrined in the major institutional orders, so providing the moral framework of the entire system” (Parkin, 1972: 83).

Thus, in this view, beneath every moral order is a political order from which the moral framework is derived and by which it is sustained. Through that moral framework, one witnesses the intellectual subordination of one group to the values and ideas of another. Tracey (1978) points out that should command of the processes of legitimation – the assumption that the

existing order of things is rational, objective and therefore legitimate – fail, then the institutionally privileged groups are able to fall back on their command of power to maintain the order that the mechanics of legitimation failed to achieve. In this view, the press would either be ideologically in tune or suffer the fate of being politically/ commercially out of order.

Murdock and Edding (1974) have sought to integrate the broad implications of this form of analysis within an empirical analysis of the functioning of media institutions. They recognise that there could be no *theory* of mass communication in general and place their analysis within the framework of a political economy of the mass media: describing the economic dynamics of media institutions and consequences of that dynamic for public consciousness. They contend that “the mass media... play a key role in determining the forms of consciousness and the modes of expression and action which are made available to people... There is a limited range of information made available by the media. The range of interpretative frameworks, the ideas, concepts, facts and arguments which people use to make sense of their lives, are to a great extent dependent on media output, both fictional and non-fictional. Yet, the frameworks offered are necessarily articulated with the views of interests producing them, and in this sense, all information is ideology” (Godling and Murdock, 1974: 226).

The substance of the argument here is that levels of tastes, information, etc are related to media output, which is nothing new. However, what is original here is the fusion of the concepts of political (with its

implication of *power, interest, etc*) and economy (with its implication of the material ordering of society). Bonded together, they provide an analytic framework within which at a broad level, the institutions of the mass media can be situated and explained.

2.32 GRAMSCI' CONCEPT OF HEGEMONY AND THE DOMINANT IDEOLOGY THESIS

Two apparently conflicting theories of ideology have been identified within Marxism, namely:

- (a) That each class by virtue of its particular relationship with the means of production, generates its own culture; and
- (b) That since each mode of production has a dominant class which controls both material production and the social conditions under which this takes place, each mode of production has a dominant ideology imposed by the dominant or ruling class (Parlour, 1980: 116).

It was this second theory which Gramsci revised as part of his attempt to show that far from being dependent upon the material or economic base, the superstructure of values, ideas, attitudes, morals etc in society could itself determine the form this base took. Gramsci introduced the concept of *hegemony* or *ideological hegemony* as it is often referred to, in order to show that the economic base in (capitalist) society was supported and reinforced by the permeation, through institutions like the schools, the mass media and the family – of an entire system of values, beliefs, attitudes, etc which were supportive of the established order and ensured its legitimacy and stability.

As ruling (dominant) classes seek to popularise and consolidate their power over the subordinate classes, so also must they popularise their own *dominant ideology*, so that it become accepted as the *common sense* of the population. Like Weber and Michels (who were not Marxists), Gramsci saw the emergence of bureaucracy and technology as new sources of hegemonic ideology. Bureaucracy, an inevitable outcome of the demand for higher and higher levels of production, brought with it what Weber referred to as the *rational-legal* culture with its emphasis on instrumental norms, obedience to authority, the domain of law and impersonal social relations and the further legitimisation of the instruments of domination available to the political, ruling elites. Unlike Weber, however, who saw these tendencies as inevitable, Gramsci analysed them in terms of their effects of obscuring power relations and class differences in society – to the detriment of the subordinate classes and therefore as tendencies which would have to be actively halted and reversed before the socialist revolution could take place (J.W. ParLOUR, 1980: 116).

The Marxian concept of the dominant ideology and Gramsci's revision of the concept as *ideological hegemony* have been incorporated into the mass media literature in different ways. For instance, the cultural norms theory (M. De Fleur, 1970: 130), the cultural-ideological school (G. Best, *et al*, 1977: 10) and also significantly in Stuart Hall's development of the dominant ideology thesis in his analysis of the mass media (S. Hall, 1973).

Along similar lines, this researcher has taken the following axioms as fundamental to this thesis:

- i). That the Nigerian society is a stratified society.
- ii). Social, economic and cultural power is unequally distributed within and between social strata. Using Hall's definition, cultural power is here taken to be synonymous with the power to communicate – that is, to speak, transmit, verbalise and comprehend, attributes which are fundamentally shaped by the education system (S. Hall, *The Structured Communication of Events, op cit*, 1973: 3).
- iii). Power is concentrated within social, political and economic elites whose members dominate the values and ideologies of the society within which the mass media operate.
- iv). Conflict between those who hold and those who lack power is played out by the mass media as if society conformed to the norms of a liberal, democratic society through the imposition of a structured framework. Conflict is permitted expression within this structure, but only in accordance with prescribed rules of the law, constitutional legality, democratic ideals and fair play which are guaranteed to exclude expressions of conflict that might undermine the dominant interest of the powerful elites. Hall refers to this framework as *structured in dominance* (S. Hall, 1975: 15).

The mass media, operating within this dominant structure, provide the communicative channels between those who define the context within which

messages are formed and those who receive these messages. The selection of information contained in these messages is neither wholly neutral nor objective, but is rather indexed, simplified and stereotyped according to the prevailing hegemonic ideology. To those whose power to rule and govern is, as Hall has stated, conditioned by the power to shape the consensus of the ruled in favour of the elites, it is in the shaping of this consensus that the mass media play such a crucial role in society (S. Hall, *op cit*: 10). The reciprocal supporting relationship between the mass media and the government effectively filters out the expression of any radical or revolutionary alternatives to existing social, economic and political conditions that might expose the frailty of the consensus and hence undermine the dominant position of the powerful (J. Whale, 1977). A consensus that Williams claims "is first assumed and then vigorously practised, rather than a consensus that has been openly arrived and made the subject of regular open review" (R. Williams, 1974: 39).

2.33 THEORY BUILDING IN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Theory building on communication and development, just as has been pointed out in the general field of mass communication, is problematic. The root of the problem appears to be historical in nature. The critical question is therefore 'can there be a general theory of communication, development and democracy to explain the diverse historical experiences of so many different nations? It is difficult to give a straight answer to the question because

nations of the world stand at so many different stages of development. Their rates of progress towards universally defined indicators of development are also varied. The last three UN Development Decades have witnessed a growing gap among nations. As a UNDP study reports:

In 1960, the richest 20% of the world's population had incomes 30 times greater than the poorest 20%. By 1990 the richest 20% were getting 60 more. And this comparison is based on the distribution between rich and poor countries. adding the maldistribution within countries, the richest 20% of the world's people get at least 150 times more than the poorest (UNDP 1992: 1).

The same report suggests that restricted or unequal access to global markets costs developing countries about \$500 billion annually – about ten times what they receive in foreign assistance. The same pattern of lopsided distribution is also reflected in media ownership: some 10 per cent of the world population owns some 90 per cent of the world media (Tehrani, 2001: 279).

Development and communication are both normative concepts; they suggest desirable processes of social change. It is therefore not surprising that theories of development communication also are normative and often ideological in orientation.

In its first four decades, development communication, just as the social science field in general was polarised by the cold war ideological battles into the two liberal and Marxist schools of thought as our analysis above has shown. The liberal theories have argued for a 'modernisation' paradigm that

tends to be idealist in perspective, emphasising individual freedom as its normative preference assumes a consensus model of social change and focus on the nation-state as its chief unit of analysis and on the internal dynamics of the developmental process (Tehrani, 2001). The Marxist theorists, by contrast, have largely operated on the basis of a 'dependency' paradigm that critiques the modernisation theories for their failure to account for the structural factors at the national and international levels and for their pro-capitalist bias. The dependency paradigm tends to be materialist in orientation, emphasising social equality as a normative preference, assumes a conflict model of society, focuses on the world capitalist system as its chief unit of analysis and on the centre-periphery dynamics of development. Dependency theories also tend to be critical in their research methods, arguing for structural change and social revolution (Blomstrom and Hettne, 1990).

Modernisation theories saw the role of communication in development primarily in terms of promoting modern as opposed to traditional consciousness through media participation, psychic mobility and diffusion of innovations. By contrast, dependency theorists critique the capitalist strategies of development as inducing lopsided development characterised by unfair divisions of labour, unequal distributions of income, media imperialism, and socio-cultural dislocations that inevitably lead to social revolutions.

In the post-cold war era, the debate seems to be shifting in a new direction focusing on a conflict between totalitarian and communitarian perspectives.

The 'totalitarian' paradigm has been historically as important as the liberal and Marxist paradigms. It gave shape and legitimacy to the development policies of the Nazi, Fascist, Stalinist and other totalitarian states. However, following the defeat of the Axis powers in World War II, totalitarian theories have not enjoyed intellectual respectability and have often appeared in disguised ideological forms.

Communitarianism represents a variety of social movements for alternative modes of communication and development with a diversity of emphases. The Third World liberation movements have been primarily concerned with the need for emancipation from economic, political, cultural and psychological dependencies of colonialism and neocolonialism. The communitarian perspective emerges from a long theoretical tradition critical of the processes of modernisation and industrialisation. This perspective tends to focus on the preservation of community as the highest value. This contrasts with liberalism's focus on 'liberty', Marxism's preoccupation with 'equality' and the totalitarian emphasis on 'order'. Although concerned with the preservation of individual freedom, social equality and national security/order; communitarianism is most deeply concerned with the loss of 'community' in the modern world.

To conclude, it is important to point out that this study leans more on the communitarian perspectives and thus assumes an interdependency position.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter describes and examines the research design and procedures employed in the study. According to Nachinias D. and Nachinias C. (1976: 50), the research design “guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analysing and interpretation. It is a logical model that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning causal relations among other variables under investigation”.

Hill and Hawkins (1980: 58) have also noted that a research design is the specification of the plan and procedures for collecting and analysing data to help solve the problem at hand.

The principal method of data collection selected for this study is the survey method. A brief definition is necessary before proceeding further in our discussion.

3.2 DEFINITIONS OF A SURVEY

The word survey has a long tradition in the English language, and developed from being the fact of viewing or inspecting something in detail (as in a land survey) to the act of doing it vigorously and comprehensively and finally to the written results (Marsh, 1982: 6). The idea of the social survey started with this connotation of the collection of social facts; but has undergone an evolution such that nowadays, the survey method is not just a

way of collecting data but also of analysing the results. As Marsh (1982) points out, a survey refers to an investigation where:

- (i) systematic measurements are made over a series of cases yielding a rectangle of data;
- (ii) the variables in the matrix are analysed to see if they show any patterns;
- (iii) the subject matter is social.

Thus, in surveys, we are looking at a particular method of data collection, a particular method of data analysis and a particular substance. The survey can therefore be defined as an inquiry which involves the systematic collection of systematic data across a sample of cases and the statistical analysis of the results.

The survey method is considered appropriate for this study which is investigating the role of the press in promoting democratic governance in Nigeria, because of its descriptive and explanatory functions. For instance, we are not only interested in finding out how many people are reading newspapers and magazines but more importantly answering the question why – which aims to explain the situation. We are also interested in testing the hypothesis outlined in our objectives and also to assess the influence of various factors which can be manipulated by public action upon some phenomenon. The purpose is also to explain the relationship between several variables.

Specifically, the survey method involves such procedures as defining the population, specifying the sample and the sampling method used in the selection of the respondents. It also involves the examination of the sources of the data, the data gathering technique, the measurement approach, the objects to be measured and the instruments used to obtain the data. Consequently, this outlines the research procedures in terms of what must be done, with a view to answering the research questions raised in the study.

3.3 DEFINITION OF THE POPULATION

The methodological problems of surveys fall into three broad groups: from whom to collect the information, what methods to use for collecting it, and how to process, analyse and interpret it (Moser and Kalton, 1980: 53).

The first step is to define the population to be covered. Here, it is useful to distinguish between the population for which the results are required (the target population) and the population actually covered (the survey population). The definition of the population also involves defining its geographical, demographic and other boundaries – and to decide whether it should be fully or only partially covered. For instance, if the survey is concerned with the adult population in Abuja, where is the lower-range limit to be drawn? Are politicians and people in the forces to be included? What about people living in prisons, hotels, mental homes, etc?

It is therefore obvious that every survey has its own problems of population definition and these must be solved clearly and precisely.

3.4 SAMPLE SURVEYS

We have seen that a population consists of a number of units of enquiry, and that the surveyor must decide “whether information is to be sought from all or only from some of these units. In other words, the researcher must decide whether she should take a census or be satisfied with a sample.

3.5 THE ADVANTAGES OF SAMPLING

The idea of sampling is neither new nor unfamiliar in every day life. For instance, the tea-taster trying different brands of tea, the merchant examining a handful of flour from the sack, the physician making a blood-test – all these are employing the method of sampling (Moser and Kalton, 1980: 56). These people undertake this sampling task with great confidence because they have good reason to believe that the material they are sampling is so homogeneous or “well mixed” that the sample will adequately represent the whole.

The advantages of sampling as against complete coverage have become obvious in recent years and need to be stated briefly here. In the first place, sampling saves money. It is cheaper to collect answers from 400 families than from 3,000, although the cost per unit of study may be higher with a sample than with a complete coverage (partly because more skilled personnel is used). Secondly, sampling saves labour. A smaller staff is required both for fieldwork and for tabulating and processing the data. In the third place, sampling saves time. Added to these practical advantages, a

sample coverage often permits a higher level of accuracy than a full enumeration. The smaller numbers allow the quality of the field staff to be at a higher level. Here more checks and tests for accuracy can be afforded at all stages; and more care/time can be given to editing and the analysis. Finally, fewer cases make it possible to collect and deal with more elaborate information from each.

These are all advantages that flow from having to deal with smaller numbers than would be involved in a complete coverage. What gives statistical sampling an advantage over any other way of choosing a part of the population is that when the estimates of the population's characteristics are made from the sample results, the precision of these estimates can also be gauged from the sample results themselves (Moser and Kalton, 1980: 58).

3.6 THE TARGET POPULATION

Hills and Hawkins (1980: 50) posit that in order to be complete, a population must be defined in terms of its elements, extent and time. The population for this study is made up politicians (members of the Federal and State Houses of Assembly) and journalists in the key cities representing the six geo-political regions in Nigeria, namely:

- Lagos, representing the Southwest
- Kaduna, representing the Northwest
- Port Harcourt, representing the South-south
- Enugu, representing the Southeast
- Maiduguri, representing the Northeast

- Jos, representing the North-central, and
- Abuja, representing the Federal Capital

These locations were chosen because they represent former or present-day seats of government in the country. They also have the largest number of media outfits and have a heavy presence of Federal Government parastatals. Hopefully, these locations will ensure validity and reliability, having a fairly representative spread of the population in Nigeria.

Subjects were picked randomly according to a distribution of 100 in each city. A list of journalists in the cities named was obtained from the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) to be able to draw up a proportionate probability sample. In the same vein, a sample of respondents (politicians) from the states' legislature was done to give fair representation. A sample of the press was drawn based on ownership and circulation figures obtained from the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) and relevant agencies.

3.7 INSTRUMENTATION

After consideration of the issues involved in this research, the researcher adopted the self-administered questionnaire as the main tool for gathering the relevant data. This decision was based on the expert views expressed by Allport, quoted in Selltiz *et al* (1971: 40) who contends that if we want to know about how people feel, what they experience, what they remember, what their emotions and motives are like, and the reasons for acting as they do, then we should simply ask them.

3.8 RATIONALE FOR THE USE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Our sample consisted of highly educated respondents. The minimum entry qualifications for journalists, which used to be the school-leaving certificate has been raised to the Ordinary Diploma at least in more established organisation. Politicians seeking public office also require the minimum qualification of the school-leaving certificate.

The questionnaire was preferred over the observational methods which are less effective in giving information about a person's perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and understanding of the press – all issues this study is interested in finding out. In an observational situation, one is unable to get information about the past and is unable to predict future behaviour. Furthermore, considering time and financial constraints, the questionnaire with a structured schedule proved quicker to administer, with its fewer technical problems.

The use of the questionnaire also enabled the researcher to cover a wider area and obtain more information than an interview situation would allow. Thus, the researcher's time is substantially saved when no interview is required. Experts (Moser and Kalton, 1980; Selltiz, 1971) have rightly pointed out that given the questionnaire, respondents take time to answer the questions more sincerely due to the anonymity allowed by the questionnaire and the absence of pressure for an immediate response. The result is, hopefully, a more reliable data. The absence of an imposing interviewer afforded the respondents the opportunity to write down feelings and opinions that may be disapproved by an interviewer, or might possibly make them

unpopular. If the questionnaire is presented as anonymous, there is no apparent identifying information and the respondent is also likely to feel great confidence that the replies will not be identified.

According to Selltiz *et al* (*op cit*), studies that have used the interview and the questionnaire in an opinion poll have found marked differences between replies to the interview and those of the questionnaire. And interestingly, with those of the questionnaire being closer to reality. More importantly, the questionnaire avoided the problems posed by interview bias. The impersonal nature of the questionnaire, its standardised instructions for recording responses ensured reasonable uniformity from one measurement situation to another, thus reducing interviewer bias.

3.9 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

In designing the questionnaire, the researcher ensured that each item was logically related to the research problem, the hypotheses to be tested, the related variables and the stated questions. Each question was meant to play a definite and precise role. The central issues in questionnaire construction that were taken into consideration were the question content, questions phrasing, response format and the physical layout of the questionnaire.

Moser and Kalton (1971: 43) are of the opinion that no survey can be better than its questionnaire. They further argue that no matter how efficient the sample design or sophisticated the analysis, ambiguous questions will produce ambiguous answers; leading questions will produce leading answers

and vague questions will produce vague answers; the combination of which compromises the accuracy of the data in ways quite difficult to measure.

Respondents therefore constructed our questions in such a way to reduce some of the stated problems above; minimise bias and allow for easy completion.

3.10 DATA COLLECTION

The two major sources of data for this study are the primary source through the questionnaire and secondary sources of interviews documents, journals, magazines, books and related publications from the library and archives and personal observation.

The type of information collected related to the research problem and the variables in the study. That is, data that enabled us to achieve the stated objectives of the study. The data further assisted in determining the type and degree of relationship among the variables.

Specifically, the types of data collected are classified as follows:

3.11 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

By demographic characteristics, we mean matters such as marital status, family or household composition, fertility, age and so on. Data on demographic factors are factual and their collection presents relatively few problems. They are also less open to error than information on behaviour and opinions, because they are more objective. Moreover, their accuracy can often be checked.

For this study, the researcher collected data on the following demographic variables, namely, age, marital status, educational background and profession. The data relating to age would produce the age distribution of the respondents. This would also enable one to analyse the relationship between age and other variables; for instance, the relationship between educational qualification and media exposure.

3.12 THE DEVELOPMENTAL ROLE OF THE PRESS IN NIGERIAN SOCIETY

The main business of the press is journalism, because it is through the functions of journalism that the press plays its role in society. Journalism, traditionally, has three major functions, and these are the news function, the interpretative function and the opinion function. To these three functions, we can add the corollary function of education for development and entertainment. Essentially, these functions boil down to persuasion, information and enlightenment, which is often dubbed as PIE.

3.13 LANGUAGE USE AND THE ARTS IN THE MEDIA

Language is undoubtedly the most important means of communication that makes possible the formation of human groups and society. However, in the course of its transition to modernity every non-western country finds itself at one time or another confronting the problem of language. For instance, for many modern educated Nigerians, there is a big difference between the language of thought and the language of emotion or of daily life. This means that early experiences, emotions and affective relations are carried on in one language and contact with new ideas, modern life and modern institutions in

another. The problem of language has serious implications for the journalist and the media who are trying to reach as many people as possible with their messages, and also for this study in the sense that the press should engender participation and empowerment. We are therefore interested in finding out the language used and read in the press, also the arts or literary materials in the media. Do people find this type of information useful? And how does it influence them?

3.14 THE PRESS, DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND EMPOWERMENT

The framework within which the press functions and communication takes place is ultimately determined by the political and social struggles which have shaped the prevailing social consensus in a given society. For instance, the way communication is organised in a democratic society like the United States of America (USA) is basically a political decision reflecting the values of the system. Democracy is a style of governance, which allows citizens the greatest scope of freedom to hold and exercise political power and enhance development.

The concept of democracy is also linked to a belief in the need for the freedom and integrity of the press and the mass media. In this view, a free and independent press is a prerequisite for democratic governance.

Consequently, the researcher is interested in finding out how the respondents in our study perceive the relationship between the press, democratic governance and empowerment in Nigeria. Of concern is also the freedom of the press in Nigeria – since the press is the critical institution of

democracy that should be generating participation, empowerment and thus development.

3.15 PERFORMANCE OF JOURNALISTS

Journalists have the rare opportunity and privilege of making history as purveyors of news and information. They serve as that vital link between the government and the governed, the surrogate voice of the voiceless. As Whale (1977: 114) aptly puts it, "the first duty of the journalist is to obtain the earliest and the most correct intelligence of the time, and instantly, by disclosing them to make them the common property of the nation... The journalist lives by disclosures, whatever passes into his/her keeping becomes a part of the knowledge and the history of our times."

This indispensable position of the journalist imposes responsibilities that are quite complex but also enviable and sacred – specifically the duty of surveillance of the environment by monitoring the process of governance. The journalist is thus the crucial link between the government and the people; criticising and analysing events, informing people and protecting their right to know.

We are therefore interested in finding out whose interests the journalist advances. Is he an advocate of democracy through participation and empowerment or a non-participant watchdog?

3.16 ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

The 600 questionnaires distributed were accompanied by a covering letter, which explained the purpose of the study with clear instructions as to what was to be done; with a view of enlisting the co-operation of the respondents in answering the questions.

The questionnaires were delivered personally in several places, but for most of them, the researcher depended on able research assistants. The assistants were trained on how to conduct the distribution of the questionnaire. The researcher started collecting the completed questionnaires after a two-week period through the same contacts. However, several visits were made over a period of three months before two hundred and fifty were collected.

3.17 DATA PROCESSING

Data processing began after fieldwork of the survey had been completed. First, the questionnaires had to be checked; secondly, the mass of detail had to be reduced to manageable proportions and thirdly, the material had to be summarised in tabular form or otherwise analysed so as to bring out its salient features. Finally, the results had to be interpreted and presented in a report.

The three operations differ basically from each other. Editing is a routine task, which requires great care. Some types of coding are reducible, but others allow a crucial role of judgement and skill (Moser and Kalton, 1971: 410). Tabulation in very small survey may be done by hand and especially

requires care, accuracy and patience, rather than skill; if the work is done using an electronic computer or unit record equipment, some acquaintance with the mode of analysis is needed.

Errors can creep into the survey at any stage of work – ranging from responses through to the production of the results. The aim in processing the data is therefore to keep these errors to a minimum. Editing of the survey schedules is intended to detect and as far as possible eliminate errors in the completed questionnaires. Thus, before the questionnaires can be regarded as ready for coding, tabulation and analysis, they were checked for completeness, accuracy and uniformity.

3.18 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis refers to the working out of statistical distributions, constructing diagrams and calculating simple measures like percentages, correlation coefficients and so on.

For this study, different statistical techniques were used to analyse the data. Tables, diagrams and charts were constructed showing the frequency distribution according to the stated criteria. Percentages and correlation coefficients were also calculated and cross tabulations were compared with the major dependable variables and independent variables.

The analysis was done on computer using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In a developing society like Nigeria, the press or the mass media system can be utilised as an agent of development because it is a great political socialiser. As an agent of political socialisation, the press teaches its political lessons not only through the information it disseminates, but also through the way in which people participate in the system (Mosel, 1983: 184). For instance, in enculturation, the child learns his culture not only from the content of what is taught, but also from his experience with the method used in teaching him. And so it is with development communication systems. This indirect learning which comes as a by-product of the way in which one learns, has been called deuterio-learning by Bateson (1987: 127-8). Thus, attitudes towards the communicator and habits for using and relating to information, as taught by the style of media participation, may sometimes have greater significance for behaviour than the content of the information itself.

This study on development communication and empowerment in Nigeria is concerned with the process of social change, particularly participation in the democratic process in Nigeria. It draws attention to the opportunities, limitations and gaps as the case may be in the present structure of the press that enables or inhibits participation and empowerment.

This chapter therefore presents the findings or results of the data analysis on the "Press and Democratic Governance in Nigeria". The analysis

is presented under the five sections, into which this survey has been divided, namely,

- i. Demographic data of the respondents,
- ii. Role of the press in the general enlightenment of the Nigerian people,
- iii. Language use and the arts in the Nigerian press,
- iv. The press and democratic governance in Nigeria, and
- v. The performance of journalists in Nigeria.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

As mentioned earlier, by demographic characteristics, we mean matters such as family or household composition, marital status, fertility, age and so on.

Politicians and journalists are the two significant actors representing and presenting the general public interest and aspirations in this study. These two groups in the survey constitute 80 per cent of the respondents, while the others make up the remaining 20 per cent as indicated in Table 4.2.1 below. To enjoy a wider input, students, teachers and civil servants constitute the 'others' that make up the 20 per cent in our sample; with 47 per cent journalists and politicians making up the remaining 33 per cent.

Table 4.2.1: Distribution of respondents by occupation

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Journalist	111	47
Politician	77	32.6
Others	48	20.3
Total	236	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002.

It is not surprising that journalists who are made up of reporters, writers, correspondents, commentators, editors, producers, etc are more eager to express their views, probably because of the duties they perform, than politicians who cautiously guard from the public eye information by which their actions and opinions can be judged. Politicians generally reserve judgement or comments on passing events till it becomes inevitable. As Whale (1977: 114) has observed, "the politician strictly confines himself if he is wise to the practical interest of his own country or to those bearing immediately upon it, he hazards no rash surmises as to the future, and he concentrates in his own transactions all that power which the press seeks to diffuse over the world. The duty of the journalist is to speak and that of the politicians is to be silent."

A government and indeed politicians might govern better and more acceptably by speaking out. It could then look for guidance, support and understanding from voters. But the instinct to governmental secrecy is old

and deep. Sometimes, there is national value in it – like during war. However, more often than not, secrecy serves narrower purposes.

Table 4.2.2: Distribution of respondents by sex

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	180	76.9
Female	54	23.1
Total	231	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002.

Gender was equally important in this study regarding differences in media patronage and perceptions of the role of the press in democratic governance.

Table 4.2.2 illustrates the point that an overwhelming majority of our respondents are male – 77 per cent. Females constitute only 23 per cent. These data confirm that there are significant gender differences in politics and journalism; and these findings are obviously biased against women. From these findings, one can argue that the masculine perspective dominates in the Nigerian press. It is therefore not surprising since very few women are found in the media organisations working as reporters, producers, etc.

From these findings, one can argue that the masculine perspective dominates in the Nigerian press. Women's participation in politics and journalism still leaves much to be desired.

Other demographic characteristics considered in the survey include age, marital status and educational qualifications and their distributions are shown in Tables 4.2.3, 4.2.4 and 4.2.5 respectively.

Table 4.2.3: Distribution of respondents by age

Category	Frequency	Percentage
18 - 24 years	13	5.6
25 - 34 years	83	35.9
35 - 44 years	108	46.8
45 - 54 years	22	9.5
55 - 64 years	5	2.2
Total	236	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

Table 4.2.3 indicates that 83 per cent of our respondents fall between the ages of 25-44, thus making their views the most dominant in this study. This age range also supports the data on qualifications. Most journalists have the minimum entry qualification of Ordinary National Diploma (OND) and are not secondary school dropouts as before. Politicians seeking public offices are required to have a minimum of the secondary school certificate or its equivalent – unlike in the past when illiterates were the leading contenders for political office. The minimum qualifications require that people invest more years in education and join the labour force at a later age. This could very well explain why most of our respondents fall between the 25-44 year-old bracket.

Table 4.2.4: Distribution of respondents by marital status

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Married	157	67.1
Single	71	30.3
Divorce	1	0.4
Separated	3	1.3
Widowed	2	0.9
Total	234	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

The data presented in Table 4.2.4 illustrates that the highest number of our respondents – constituting 67 per cent – are married; 30 per cent are either divorced, separated or widowed. The high incidence of married people in our sample is contrary to the stereotypical belief that married people do not cope very well with the demanding duties as politicians and journalists and so there is a high incidence of divorce among them.

Table 4.2.5: Distribution of respondents by educational qualification

Category	Frequency	Percentage
First School Leaving Certificate	3	1.3
WASC/SSCE	14	6
OND/Equivalent	39	16.7
B.Sc/Equivalent	307	45.9
M.Sc	55	23.6
Ph.D	5	2.1
Others	10	4.3
Total	236	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

According to Table 4.2.5, 63 per cent of our respondents have either an OND or B.Sc/equivalent. This is a positive indication that the participants in politics and journalism are adequately educated and have gone through the basics in secondary education or its equivalent. These people are therefore expected to master the rudiments of their jobs effectively.

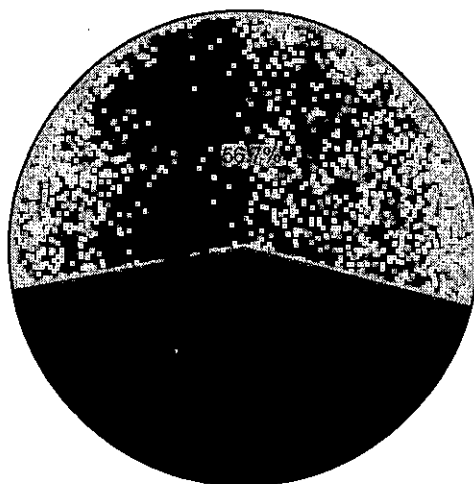
We can therefore conclude that the professionals in this study have the prerequisite qualifications and that these qualifications would tend to improve their effectiveness at their respective jobs. The findings on this subject are contrary to the belief that most politicians are not highly educated. This lack of education in the past on the part of the politicians especially has changed for the better.

4.3 THE DEVELOPMENTAL ROLE OF THE PRESS IN NIGERIAN SOCIETY

As mentioned earlier, the traditional role of the press revolves around persuasion, information and enlightenment (PIE); but the role of particular units of the press derives from which part or how much of the PIE it likes to bite. We can discern the role (role-set) of the press by looking at the names its various units, particularly newspapers and magazines give themselves (Uyo, 1996: 63). Nigerian publications bear the following interesting titles: *Champion, The Voice, Triumph, The Guardian, Daily Trust, Standard, Tell, Vanguard, Newswatch*, etc. Each of these terms presupposes a clear-cut function or a mission on behalf of the people, vis-à-vis the government.

For a society that needs to be moved from the stage of a parochial or subject political culture to a participant one that would ensure empowerment and democratic governance, the Nigerian press certainly parades titles that can meet the challenge. However, there is a big difference between role conception and role behaviours. The fundamental questions are these: "Are the various units of the Nigerian press playing their roles adequately? If yes, then who are the beneficiaries? Does their performance match the mission proclaimed by their titles, etc? Our findings in this study will, hopefully, help to answer some of these questions.

Figure 4.3.1: Pie chart reflecting the access to print news sources



Source: Field Survey 2002.

Figure 4.3.1 indicates that the press is a popular source of news among respondents in our survey, since 56.7 per cent of the respondents always have access to newspapers, while 43.3 per cent sometimes have access, putting the combined percentage of respondents with access to press outlets at 99 per cent.

The data on Table 4.3.1 below discusses the role of the press vis-à-vis respondents' access to newspapers.

Table 4.3.1: Access to newspapers

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Always	131	55.5
Sometimes	100	42.4
No response	5	2.1
Total	236	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

The data on Table 4.3.2 below give more details about this access to print news sources.

Table 4.3.2: Patronage of print news sources

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Buy your own newspaper/magazine	93	47.2
I depend on friends	40	20.3
I depend on library/common room	64	32.5
Total	197	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2002

The data on Table 4.3.2 shows that 43.9 per cent of our respondents actually buy their own newspapers or magazines, 18.9 per cent depend on friends while 30 per cent depend on the library/common rooms that buy and keep newspapers for public use.

The findings here should be of particular interest to organisations in general who should be encouraged that employees do read newspapers and magazines that are placed for them in school/public libraries/office common rooms, etc.

Table 4.3.3: Patronage of print news sources

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	43	18.2
Sometimes	162	68.6
Not at all	23	9.7
No response	8	3.4
Total	236	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

Table 4.3.4: Reasons for regular purchase of newspapers/magazines

Category	Frequency	Percentage
The quest for information and news update	149	63.2
Professional requirement	6	2.5
Collectors items/reference requirement	81	34.3
Total	236	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

Table 4.3.4 indicates that the quest for information tends to be the primary reason for buying newspapers and magazines by our respondents. The reasons that follow for the purchase are collector's items – where they are used as reference materials.

Occasional newspaper/magazine buyers who are more dominant in terms of numerical strength advance five major reasons for their purchase; with the financial limitations being the dominant reason for their occasional purchase of newspapers.

Table 4.3.5: Reasons for occasional purchase of newspapers/magazines

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Anticipated news about issues of interest	60	25.4
Cost of paper/magazine, i.e. financial limitations	134	56.8
Other news media, e.g. radio, TV, etc	27	11.4
Unreliable news inputs	15	6.4
Total	236	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

Thus, Table 4.3.5 indicates that the poor financial state of the population is the main reason behind the occasional purchases of the print news sources. This financial limitation should be of concern to news organisations that need to reach as many people as possible in order to encourage participation.

However, these results also indicate that the personal purchase of the print news sources is not a direct indication of press accessibility. The public has access to print materials through other sources than buying personal copies, for instance, school/public libraries/office common rooms, square newsstands through the Free Readers Association (FRA).

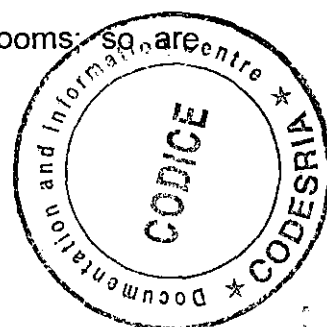


Table 4.3.6: Reading pattern of vernacular press

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	1	0.4
Sometimes	77	32.6
Not at all	150	63.6
No response	8	3.4
Total	236	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002

The table above demonstrates that a majority of the people in our survey - 65.8 per cent - never read vernacular print news items, with 33.8 per cent doing so occasionally. The reasons for this unfortunate development are given in Table 4.3.7.

Table 4.3.7: Reasons for non-reading of vernacular press

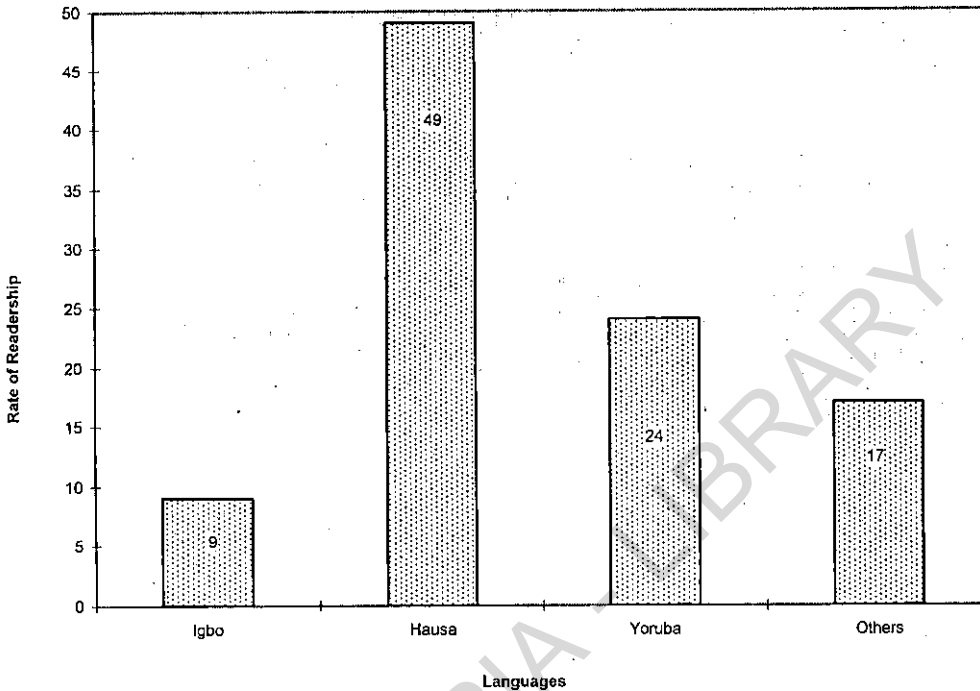
Category	Frequency	Percentage
Non-existence in dialect	150	63.6
Difficult to read	42	17.8
English source readily available	12	5.1
Expensive	6	2.5
Less educative/shallow content	26	11.0
Total	236	100

Source: Field Survey, 2002.

Non-existence of vernacular newspapers in the various Nigerian languages dominates the reasons for the non-reading of the print news items. Even where the vernacular press is available, the difficulty in comprehension

and assimilation becomes a barrier because most people cannot read in their languages.

Figure 4.3.2: The most read vernacular print materials



Source: Field Survey 2002.

The above data show that the Hausa language newspaper enjoys the highest patronage, closely followed by Yoruba, others and Igbo.

4.3.1 Press Content

Newspapers and magazines contain different types of news and information that caters for different types of people. To this end, different people enjoy different materials that satisfy their inclinations. Table 4.3.10 reflects this attitude.

Table 4.3.8: News/Information enjoyed in the press

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Editorials	139	63
Sports	165	73
Cartoons	125	57
News stories	168	76
Personal columns	90	40
Arts/literary columns	65	29
Advertisements	41	19
Others	26	12

Please note that respondents were asked to tick as many categories as possible (multiple response) and so our total for each row is the total number of respondents.

According to the data in Table 4.3.8 it is clear that news stories, sports, editorials and cartoons are the leading areas of interest in newspapers/magazines.

The reasons given for the selection of the above as favourites, most popular and satisfactory in newspapers and magazines are enumerated in Table 4.3.9.

Table 4.3.9: Press items and reasons for enjoying them

Category	Percentage
Editorial	Official reaction/position
News stories	Update on current issues
Sports	To watch favourite sports and athletes in action
Cartoons	Humorous and satirical commentary on burning issues
Personal columns	Learn from or identify with writers' view on timely issues
Arts/literary column	Entertainment/educative
Advertisement	Information about the best products in the market

Source: Field Survey 2002.

4.3.2 Accessibility of Electronic Media

One reason why the press is not patronised regularly and consistently is the availability of other news/communication sources. An important alternative to the print media is the numerous electronic outlets as reflected in the tables below.

Table 4.3.10: Ownership of electronic communication media

Electronic Item	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	219	94.4
Television	196	84.5
Telephone	66	28.4
Computers	43	18.5
Others	16	6.9

** Please see details in Appendix.*

From the data on Table 4.3.10, 94 per cent of our respondents own radio sets, while 84 per cent own television sets. Less than half own the other communication media like telephones, computers and others.

The utilisation of the two popular media – radio and television (TV) – are tabulated below in Table 4.3.11.

Table 4.3.11: Television viewing

Television Viewing	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	137	59.3
Sometimes	93	40.3
Not at all	1	0.4
Total	231	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

From the data above, it is clear that television viewing is quite high since 59 per cent of our respondents view TV daily with 40 per cent doing so

occasionally. These figures compare favourably with media habits in many western and developing countries.

Table 4.3.12: Radio listening

Radio Listening	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	160	69.3
Occasionally	71	30.7
Total	231	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Participation in radio listening can be seen in Table 4.3.12 above. Sixty-nine per cent of our respondents listen to radio daily – indicating a higher percentage than the viewership of television. Thirty per cent listen to radio occasionally.

The reasons presented for the habitual patronage of the electronic media are presented in Table 4.3.13 below.

Table 4.3.13: Reasons for patronising electronic information source

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Quest for information/news	121	51.3
Visual perspective	55	23.3
Entertainment	60	25.4
Total	236	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Respondents' major reason for patronising the electronic media is the quest for information or news and not solely for entertainment, as it is generally believed. The findings in this survey are similar to Mosel's (1983) study of communication patterns in Thailand, where the urban elite dominates participation in the media.

4.3.3 The Press and Electronic Media as Reliable Sources

From our findings thus far, we can argue that Nigerians depend heavily on the print and electronic media as sources of information. However, going beyond that, this study tried to find out respondents' views about the reliability of these news sources – especially in relaying political and government related news.

Table 4.3.14: Reliability of political/governmental news in the press

Political/governmental News	Frequency	Percentage
Always	66	28.7
Sometimes	156	67.8
Not at all	8	3.5
Total	236	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Table 4.3.15: Radio and television as reliable sources of information about government and politics

Radio and Television	Frequency	Percentage
Always	76	33.6
Sometimes	146	64.2
Not at all	5	2.2
Total	236	100

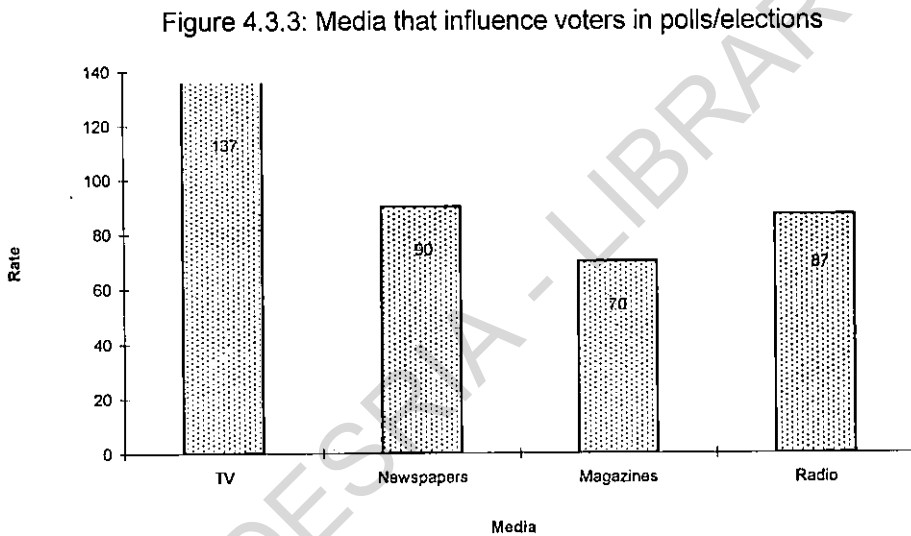
Source: Field Survey 2002.

From the tables above, it is clear that Nigerians' expectations concerning the accuracy of their newspapers, magazines, radio and television are uniformly pessimistic, with 67.8 per cent stating that sometimes newspapers and magazines are reliable and 64 per cent making the same observations about radio and television. Most of our respondents believe that the print news is slightly more reliable. How much this perception of reliability affects readership or patronage will be shown later.

Mosel's study of the Bangkok elite shows that in terms of absolute percentages, the agreement between readership and interest is substantially greater than the agreement between readership and perceived reliability.

An important consideration in this study is media influence in the decision making of voters during elections.

Figure 4.3.3 below indicates the media that influence voters in polls/elections.



Source: Field Survey 2002.

Figure 4.3.3 indicates that television provides the highest level of influence as indicated by our respondents. Experts have pointed to the immediacy and audio visual qualities of television that gives it an edge over the other media. No doubt, broadcasting's immediacy and visual images have stronger effects.

To balance our findings about television and the other media, the study sought to find out if respondents' shared/discussed information in the media with friends loved ones and neighbours.

This consideration of informal oral communication is important because of the consequent implications of "opinion leaders" or "mediators" as the case may be. Our findings (Table 4.3.16) show that 70.4 per cent sometimes discuss news items in the media with friends, and neighbours.

Thus, we can argue that based on our findings, Nigerians are exposed to a considerable degree of the formal mass media, but they also participate even more in a continuing pattern of informal social communications. The informal sources mentioned apart from friends and neighbours are priests, 'mallams', elders, sheikhs, chiefs and government representatives.

The informal relaying of information serves to supplement the content of the mass media and often to also reinforce and reiterate its content. Government control of the media, and private owners that are essentially composed of megaphones or proxies of government means that there is always a need to know the 'inside story'. It is this additional information which the informal system supplies.

Table 4.3.16: Discussion of news stories with friends/neighbours

Discussion of Stories	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	63	27.0
Sometimes	164	70.4
Not at all	6	2.6
Total	233	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2002.

4.3.4 Media Preference

Figures from this study show that in terms of the press, readership and preference go together. Table 4.3.17 and Table 4.3.18 indicate the preferred newspapers and magazines.

Table 4.3.17: Preferred Newspapers

Newspapers	Frequency	Percentage
Daily Times	7	2.5
Nigerian Standard	10	3.6
Tribune	9	3.2
Concord	1	0.4
Weekly Trust	7	2.5
Champion	7	2.5
Vanguard	40	14.4
New Nigerian	17	6.1
Punch	60	21.6
This Day	55	19.8
The Guardian	65	23.4
Total	278	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Table 4.3.18: Preferred Magazines

Magazines	Frequency	Percentage
The Week	10	4.5
Newswatch	73	32.7
Tell	79	35.4
Hotline	14	6.3
Crystal	11	4.9
Trust	11	4.9
Others	25	11.2
Total	223	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Results show that *The Guardian* and *The Punch* newspapers are the clear leaders while *Tell* and *Newswatch* lead in the magazines category.

Tables 4.3.19 and 4.3.20 enumerate the shortfall or major setbacks of the Nigerian print and electronic media respectively.

Table 4.3.19: Problems with Nigerian papers/magazines

Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Bias in news/sentimental	85	45.7
Exaggerated news/headlines	11	5.9
Not objective/unreliable/influenced by government	9	4.8
Non-investigative/misinformation	38	20.4
Poor production quality	15	8.1
Expensive	28	15.1
Total	28	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Table 4.3.20: Problems with Nigerian electronic media

Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Foreign influence	36	25.9
Poor production quality	50	36.0
Bias	11	71.9
Excessive	8	5.8
Influence by external force	18	12.9
Repeated programmes	7	5.0
Non-investigative	9	6.5
Total	139	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Results show that 85 per cent of our respondents think that a major fault or problems of the Nigerian media are bias in news, while 36 per cent indicate that the electronic media's major fault is poor production quality.

4.3.5 Literary Images in the Media

An important consideration in this study is media content and their influence on the public reader.

The arts and literary columns are regular reading features of newspaper patrons. Tables 4.3.21 and 4.3.22 show the percentage of people who read such columns and the given reasons. Since the arts/literary columns are broad based, Table 5.3.23 and 5.3.24 present a summary of their influence in socio-political events.

Table 4.3.21: The literary of arts column in the newspaper/magazine

Readership	Frequency	Percentage
Always	20	9.4
Sometimes	146	68.5
Not at all	47	22.1
Total	233	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Table 4.3.22: Information about Government/politics on literary/arts column

	Frequency	Percentage
Always	20	9.4
Sometimes	146	68.5
Not at all	47	22.1
Total	233	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Table 4.3.23: The arts/literary columns' contribution to democratic governance

Contribution	Frequency	Percentage
Always	32	15.6
Sometimes	132	64.4
Not at all	41	20
Total	205	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Table 4.3.24: Literary/arts columns' influences on viewers' perception of society and government

Influence	Frequency	Percentage
Always	25	11.9
Sometimes	132	62.6
Not at all	54	25.6
Total	211	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Table 4.3.25: Media that expressed arts/literary works the most

Media	Frequency	Percentage
Television	101	37
Magazine	76	21
Radio	75	20
Newspaper	118	38

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Our data show that television and newspaper are regarded as the media that most express arts/literary works.

How does language use influence people? Table 4.3.26 enumerates respondents' opinion.

Table 4.3.26: Media impact on respondents' language use influence

Media	Frequency	Percentage
Newspaper	100	120
Television	70	128
Radio	59	148
Magazine	66	81

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Newspapers are vetted as the media that influences users' language the most; while radio is the most effective that conveys information about government and politics.

Newspapers and magazines contain different types of news/information issues that cater for different types of people. To this end, different people enjoy different materials that satisfy their inclinations. Table 4.3.27 and Table 4.3.28 reflect these interests.

Table 4.3.27 News/Information items enjoyed in print

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Editorial	139	63
Sports	165	73
Cartoons	125	57
News stories	168	76
Personal columns	90	40
Arts/literary columns	65	29
Advertisement	41	19
Others	26	12

(Multiple response)

Source: Field Survey 2002.

According to the data above, it is clear that news, sports, editorials and cartoons are the dominant areas of interest in newspapers/magazines that are read the most.

The reasons given for the selection of the above four areas as the most popular and satisfactory in papers/magazines are enumerated below in

Table 4.3.28

Table 4.3.28: Print items and reasons for liking them

Item	Reasons
Editorial	Official reaction/position
News stories	Update on current issues
Sports	To watch favourite sports and sports people in action
Cartoons	Humorous reasons and satirical commentary on burning issues
Personal columns	Learn or identify with others' view on issues
Arts/literary column	Entertainment/educative
Advertisement	Information about the best products in the market

Source: Field Survey 2002.

One reason why the print media is not patronised regularly and consistently as reflected in Table 4.3.28 is the availability of other news/communication sources. An important alternative to the print media is the numerous electronic media.

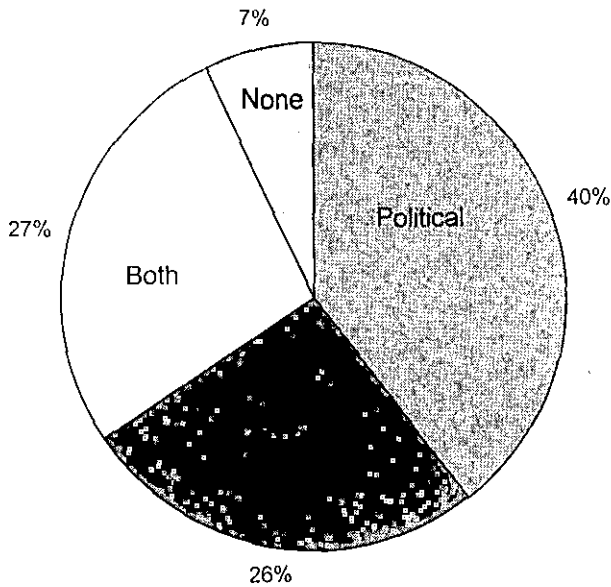
Table 4.3.29 Reasons respondents gave for patronizing the electronic media

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Get information about politicians	33	35.1
Entertainment/information	16	17.0
Humorous	15	16.0
Expose hidden message	9	9.6
Relates to current events	21	22.3
Total	94	100.00

Source: Field Survey 2002.

It is interesting to note that a higher number of respondents appreciate cartoons for the serious commentary they make on politicians and not just for entertainment. Figure 4.3.4 shows that 40 per cent appreciate cartoons because of the information they get there about politicians and 26 per cent appreciate social cartoons because they comment on current events.

Figure 5.3.4: Pie chart showing the most appreciated cartoons



Source: Field Survey 2002.

The data show that cartoons that make commentary on politics are the most popular cartoons.

4.4 THE PRESS AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

There is no doubt that the Nigerian press has grown and acquired a position of relevance in society. Claude Ake (1982) described the position of the Nigerian press when he said:

It is quite clear that the press takes itself seriously and demands to be taken seriously. What is so special about the press?... The press is viewed as the guarantor of the possibility of freedom, which it fosters by studiously following what those in power do and subjecting them to critical analysis; and by ensuring the accountability of those in power. The press is expected to ensure effective citizen participation in government by keeping people informed, sophisticating their choices and increasing their consciousness of their rights and obligations as citizens. Finally, the press is

supposed to foster national unity by virtue of the fact that the media inevitably act as a common communication point for the heterogeneous political and cultural groups in society (Ake, C., 1982: 5).

The press and democratic governance in our study essentially refers to the role of the media in communication development. Research in this area has varied significantly in its emphasis over the years. During the early period, research focused on the substitution of the mass media for interpersonal communications in industrialised countries (C. S. Steinberg, 1966). Some commentators saw the media as a "unifying force" in society; while others have perceived them as powerful propaganda instruments destructive to democracy (Bauer and Bauer, 1960).

Whatever the opinions about the ultimate impacts of the press, their pervasiveness is not in doubt. Despite this pervasiveness, some authors have questioned the influence of media content on public understanding, attitudes and behaviour. Bauer (*op cit*), for instance, has suggested that the media are strongly correlated with the pre-formed views of receivers. Horland (1964) has shown that there is no relationship between the positions adopted in newspaper editorials and the "editorial" positions of newspaper readers. Klapper (1974) maintains that although the mass media may be relatively ineffective in changing existing attitudes, they are much more effective in forming opinions and attitudes on new issues, which are not correlated with existing attitude clusters.

Our findings in this study demonstrate that the press is mainly an urban phenomenon with its impact felt mostly by the elites.

Democracy indeed has a highly exacting creed of expectations of the press. The press is saddled with the responsibilities of surveillance of the socio-political environment, reporting developments likely to impinge, positively or negatively, on the welfare of citizens. It is expected to be a platform for an intelligible and illuminating advocacy by politicians and spokespersons of other causes and interest groups. Dialogue across a diverse range of views, as well as between power holders and the public. Democracy also gives incentives for citizens to learn, choose and become involved through participation, rather than merely to be followers in the political process and in this way enhancing development.

Thus, a democratic government should allow the practice of investigative journalism that can enhance accountability and the development of society. Table 4.5.30 below shows the rating by our respondents of the practice of investigative journalism in the Nigerian press.

Table 4.4.30: The practice of investigative journalism in the Nigerian press

Investigative Journalism	Frequency	Percentage
Always	38	17.0
Sometimes	154	69.1
Not at all	31	13.9
Total	223	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2002.

As the table above indicates, 69 per cent of the respondents think that investigative journalism is often practised in Nigeria, but not always – with only 17 per cent saying it is always practised.

The following reasons are given as factors that deter the consistent practice of investigative journalism in Nigeria as shown in Table 4.4.31 below.

Table 4.4.31: Factors deterring investigative journalism in Nigeria

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of conducive atmosphere	56	26.2
Journalists influenced by money	17	7.9
Owner's influence	49	22.9
Lack of press freedom	57	26.6
Poor incentives/environment	22	10.3
Hurry to publish material	13	6.1
Total	214	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Our data indicates that lack of press freedom; lack of a conducive atmosphere and owner's influence is vetted as the reasons responsible for deterring the practice of investigative journalism in Nigeria.

Our findings are consistent with observations by Nigerian authors, human rights activists that a major problem militating against the press playing an effective and significant role in the democratic dispensation in Nigeria is the application of the freedom of the press. The concept of Press Freedom, as we have come to know it, requires that journalists and media practitioners should have the freedom to publish news and opinion for public information and knowledge, without hindrance or constraints. This freedom encompasses the right to hold opinion and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference (Mbachu, *et al*, 1993).

Since 1960 when Nigeria attained political independence, provisions guaranteeing freedom of expression have been entrenched in the constitution. Essentially, press freedom is a corollary of freedom of expression which in itself is a fundamental right without which genuine empowerment cannot thrive. The right of a people to freely express themselves and comment on the affairs of the state and conduct of the government is an intrinsic part of development that demands accountability of rulers and public officials to the citizenry.

The 1960, 1963, 1979, 1999 Nigerian constitutions include provisions guaranteeing the right to freedom of expression. Under this provision, the

right to receive and impart ideas and information and to own and operate any medium in furtherance of these rights is guaranteed.

Thus, the duty of the press to uphold the government's responsibility and accountability to the people is given constitutional backing under the Nigerian constitution, requiring that the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in the constitution and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people. The difficulty of fulfilling this role by the Nigerian press is a major development setback.

How often does the press dig up facts about those in leadership or governance? Table 4.4.32 reflects the opinion of our respondents.

Table 4.4.32: Whether the press digs up facts about those in leadership or governance

Digging Up Facts	Frequency	Percentage
Always	29	13.1
Regularly	52	23.4
Occasionally	141	63.5
Total	222	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Data from the table above show clearly that 63 per cent of our respondents believe that the press occasionally digs up facts about those in

leadership positions, while only 13 per cent believe they do so always. The following reasons were provided for this trend.

Table 4.4.33: Reasons why journalists do not dig up facts about those in leadership and governance

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Financial reasons	95	44.9
Fear of government machinery	100	46.5
Barrier of access	19	15.6
Total	214	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Table 4.4.33 reveals that fear of government machinery and financial constraints are the major reasons why journalists do not dig up facts about those in leadership or governance. However, sometimes investigative journalism dividends are seen in special situations as enumerated below.

Table 4.4.34: Periods when investigative journalism is employed by the press

Period	Frequency	Percentage
During elections	98	37.3
When leaders involved are dead	21	7.9
When there are problems in leadership	51	19.4
Media/public interest	93	35.4
Total	263	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

From our data above, it is interesting to note that Nigerian journalists are likely to go into some form of investigative journalism when an election is imminent, when there is public pressure and interest and thirdly when there are problems in leadership.

As limited as these categories are, one can argue that there is a redeeming quality and some hope in the fact that the audience can participate actively in the media by ensuring that its needs and interest are given due attention. In practice, the press promptly heed any sign of audience dislike or rejection and in that sense the audience holds a sort of reserve veto power (Gurevitch and Blumler, 1990).

Nonetheless, there are systemic reasons why the audience for development communication, is vulnerable to neglect and misrepresentation. For instance, out of the three main elements in a political communication

system – politicians, journalists and audience members, it is the audience that though most numerous, is least powerful because it is least organised. Hence, the need for an organised community that is empowered through participation in governance.

How often the press digs up facts about the government and societal problems has direct implications for the audience. Table 4.5.38 reveals how often our respondents think the press dig up facts about government and developmental problems.

Table 4.4.35: Should the press dig up facts about government and development problems

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Always	139	63.8
Regularly	61	28
Sometimes	15	6.9
Not at all	3	1.4
Total	218	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

The figures above reveal that a majority of our respondents, 63 per cent, think that the press should always practice investigative journalism relating to government and development problems; 28 per cent believe this should be done regularly; while 6.9 per cent hold the view that it should do so “sometimes”, with an insignificant 1.4 per cent indicating that it should not be done at all.

Our findings thus far have established the fact that investigative journalism in the press is of special interest and needed not only by politicians and journalists but also by audience members.

The study therefore sought to find out which media our respondents will feel/think best serve the purpose of investigative journalism. Table 4.4.36 reveals our findings.

Table 4.4.36: The media better placed to practice investigative journalism

Media	Frequency	Percentage
Television	35	23.8
Newspapers	64	43.5
Radio	13	8.8
Magazines	35	23.8
Total	147	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

The data above indicate that most of our respondents believe that newspapers and magazines are better placed to practice investigative journalism. Our findings are consistent with other findings that prove the superiority of the press over the other media when it comes to the issue of in-depth reporting and investigative journalism.

Table 4.4.37 collates views on whether or not government determines the operational framework of the press.

Table 4.4.37: Whether government determines how the press should function

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Always	100	45.6
Sometimes	96	43.6
Not at all	24	10.9
Total	220	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Our data reveal that government significantly determines how the press/media should operate in Nigeria. Eighty-eight (88) per cent of the respondents believe that government has various levels of influence on the operation of the media. Our findings are consistent with our experience and observation of the Nigerian media scene; and more importantly are supported by related studies by Jibrin Ibrahim (1983) and Bala Jibril (1998).

Apart from those media organisations owned and controlled by private persons, the bulk of the Nigerian media system is owned by the government. Radio and television are almost exclusively owned and controlled by the government. Jibrin Ibrahim (1997: 8) notes that:

... Television, like radio, is a government monopoly. In terms of ownership structure and operational policy, it is identical with radio... with the emergence of private radio and television, together with state government owned television, the picture is getting very close to that of the press.

On the other hand, the press is also largely owned and controlled by the government – federal and state. There are growing numbers of privately owned newspapers. However, most of these privately owned presses are owned by politicians who have party loyalties.

The ownership and control patterns of the Nigerian media is aptly described by Jibrin Ibrahim:

The picture that emerges of the Nigerian press therefore is that it is composed essentially of either government megaphones or megaphones of government proxies. The distinction between the private and the public media in terms of ownership and control therefore becomes irrelevant. What becomes relevant is that it is the same interests, it is the same ideology (Ibrahim, 1983: 5).

The ownership and control patterns of the press in Nigeria has serious implications for developmental goals. The government therefore should carry the burden of ensuring that there are enough outlets that will enhance participation and empowerment for development. The government could also promote private or community ownership of press outlets.

Since our data confirms the fact that government exerts great influence on the ownership and operation of the media, Table 4.4.38 attempts to identify which system of government is likely to guarantee significant media freedom and good governance, which is an attribute of development.

Table 4.4.38: System of government that guarantees press freedom and good governance

Type of Government	Frequency	Percentage
Secular state (no official religion)	26	12.4
Theocratic state (sharia/Christian state)	28	13.4
Democratic state	152	72.7
Military government	3	1.4
Total	209	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

From the table above, 73 per cent of our respondents think that a democratic state best guarantees press freedom and good governance; 13 per cent think that a theocratic (Christian or sharia state) will guarantee press freedom and good governance, while an insignificant 1.4 per cent believe the military will provide the conducive environment. Thus, from the data presented, we can conclude that democracy is the most recommended system of government that will ensure press freedom and good governance.

The researcher probed further by asking how respondents rated the press in promoting the ideals of democratic governance by properly informing the public about government and their responsibilities. The findings are presented below in Table 4.4.39.

Table 4.4.39: Performance of the press in keeping the public informed about governance and their responsibilities

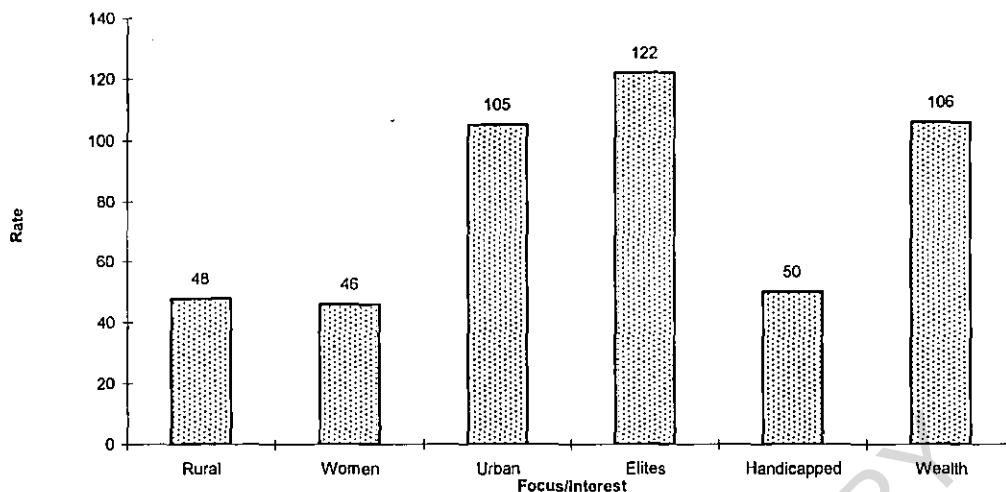
Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	28	12.4
Very good	53	23.6
Good	123	54.7
Poor	16	7.1
Very poor	5	2.2
Total	225	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Fifty-four (54.7) per cent of our respondents rate the performance of the press as good. Thus, we can infer that the public rates the press moderately in their public enlightenment about governance.

Now the golden question is: whose interest does the Nigerian press represent? Figure 4.4.5 captures our interesting findings.

Figure 4.4.5: Bar chart showing the levels of focus and interest of the media



Source: Field Survey 2002.

The data from Figure 5 show that the press' focus and interest is slanted towards urban dwellers, elites and the wealthy people in Nigerian society. The participation conscientisation and empowerment of the poor and weak (rural dwellers, women, handicapped) whose interest should be the focus of the press is relegated.

This failure of the press calls for a new focus for the press that will start with participation, conscientisation – with its threefold stages of Naming (or identifying a setback), Reflection and Action – that will ensure empowerment and good governance.

As Dudley (1993) has pointed out, participation is often considered as a tool for carrying out a task whether political or physical. Its most obvious use as a political tool is to bring people together to form or join popular democratic organisations, where they can unite with others to defend their fundamental rights. As Freire (1972: 172-3) puts it, "unity among the oppressed" is considered a necessary prerequisite to liberation.

4.5 PERFORMANCE OF JOURNALISTS

The media as a machinery depends heavily on the journalist to gather facts and present them in an understandable and "objective" manner to the public. As purveyors of news and information, journalists are also consumers and targets of media influence. Just like the media, the role of the journalist places enormous responsibilities on him/her. Mohammed (1996: 91) has pointed out that fighting in the course of justice is the duty of the journalist. Someone has to speak for the truth, for without that someone no one would be able to distinguish truth from falsehood. Artabanus, writing around 480 BC, says:

It is impossible, if no more than one opinion is uttered, to make choice of the best: a man is forced then to follow whatever advice may have been given him; but if opposite speeches are delivered, then choice can be exercised. In like manner, pure gold is not recognised by itself; but when we test it along with baser ore, we perceive which is the better (Arbanus, quoted in Bala Mohammed, *op cit*: 91).

In trying to do his or her job, the journalist, especially the one who reports on the rights of others, sometimes loses his or her own rights. Among the myriad of problems encountered, according to Brasch and Uloth (1986) are:

Constitutional provisions; security laws; bribes; special favours; denial of access to government information; licensing, registration; certification of bona fide journalists; post-publication reprisals, arrests, interrogation; torture, bombing; and other

terror tactics; forced closure of media houses, (and ultimately) disappearance or killings of journalists.

In Nigeria, another writer, Bitrus (1996), mentions the 1978 advice of the then Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo to the press:

Ensure constructive and non-inflammatory journalism in this critical period when the nation debates the issues and the form our future political life should take... (Mohammed, *op cit*: 93).

However, there are always two sides to a story as Mohammed Haruna (1996) of the defunct *Citizen* magazine observes that the journalists are also to be blamed. He observes that:

Naturally, we have other enemies, but if we become errand boys of other people instead of reporting objectively; if we seek to persuade the public to our positions by half truths and often times even bare-faced lies; then we must be our own worst enemies.

Despite the problems faced by the press and journalists, governments, the world over, believe in the inevitability of having an effective press system and press people. A former Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, once stated that: "Just as an army cannot successfully fight without weapons, the (Communist) Party cannot successfully carry out its ideological work without such a sharp and militant weapon as the press" (and journalists) (Kruschev, quoted in Mohammed, *op cit*: 94).

The implication for journalists here is that they are not only perceived as adversaries of government but also perform a complementary function. The journalist should therefore be an advocate of participatory democracy.

Our findings in this study will find some of the above as supportive information for journalists in the performance of their duties.

As watchdogs and vanguards of the people, how bold and fearless are the Nigerian journalists? Table 4.6.43 reflects our findings.

Table 4.5:40: Are Nigerian journalists bold and fearless?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Always	37	16.6
Sometimes	153	68.6
Not at all	33	14.8
Total	223	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Our data indicate that Nigerian journalists are moderately considered bold, with 16 per cent stating that they are always bold and 68 per cent saying that they are sometimes bold. An inconsequential 14 per cent think they are not bold at all.

This perception seems to affect the ratings of the Nigerian journalists as indicated in Table 4.5.41.

Table 4.5.41: Performance of the Nigerian journalists

Performance Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	32	14.5
Very good	55	24.9
Good	102	46.2
Poor	26	11.8
Very poor	6	2.7
Total	221	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Our data indicate that 46 per cent of our respondents rate the performance as good, while 24 per cent rate them as very good; 14 per cent think they are excellent; 12 per cent consider them as poor, while 3 per cent think they are very poor.

On the whole, we can say that the rating of their performance is positive and above average.

Nonetheless, the researcher probed further to establish the relevance of the Nigerian journalists. Findings are shown below in Table 4.5.42.

Table 4.5.42: Relevance of journalists to society

Relevance	Frequency	Percentage
Always	169	75.1
Sometimes	49	21.8
Not at all	7	3.1
Total	225	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

As mentioned earlier in our discussion, the relevance of the journalist in the Nigerian society is unquestionable, with an insignificant majority of our respondents, 75 per cent, indicating that journalists are always relevant; while 21 per cent believe that they are sometimes relevant and 3 per cent saying not at all.

The researcher was also interested in finding out how respondents feel about the remuneration and general welfare of the journalist because this aspect determines to a large extent their contribution and job performance. Table 4.5.43 captures our findings.

Table 4.5.43: Are Nigerian journalists well paid?

Payment of Journalists	Frequency	Percentage
Always	17	7.9
Sometimes	59	27.6
Not at all	138	64.5
Total	214	100

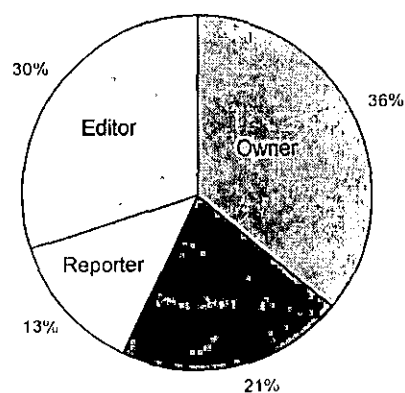
Source: Field Survey 2002.

Our data reveal the dismal rating by our respondents regarding the general welfare status of journalists. Sixty-four (64) per cent of our respondents think that journalists are not well paid at all, while 25 per cent think that sometimes they are not well paid.

It is important to note that despite the dismal rating of their welfare package, Nigerian journalists still perform their jobs above average. This is a positive indicator that presents the journalist as not essentially interested in the monetary rewards of the job, but probably more interested in keeping the public informed and being that surrogate voice of the voiceless and the eyes and ears of the public.

Another important consideration here is: How much independence the Nigerian journalist enjoys; and if not, who are those influencing the Nigerian media output? Findings are shown in Figure 4.5.6.

Figure 4.5.6: Bar chart depicting those that influence media outputs



Source: Field Survey 2002.

Figure 6 indicates that owners of media organisations, editors, government and reporters determine media input and output respectively – with media owners as the dominant characters in determining what is published or produced.

Since our data have established the fact that media owners play dominant role in media output, government ownership of the media becomes an open debate. Table 4.5.44 reveals our findings about who should own the media.

Table 4.5.44: Who should own the media

Ownership	Frequency	Percentage
Private	95	40.3
Government	83	35.2
Both	58	24.6
Total	236	100

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Our findings indicate that media ownership is best left in private hands. This is supported by 40.3 per cent of our respondents, although 35.2 per cent and 24.6 per cent are of the view that press should be left in the hand of government and between government and private hands respectively.

Another important question in this survey was who is Nigeria's most favourite journalist? The interesting answers are listed in Table 4.5.45.

Table 4.5.45: Most favourite Nigerian journalist

Most Favourable Nigerian Journalist	Frequency	Percentage
Frank Olize	14	19.4
Late Dele Giwa	17	23.6
Dan Agbese	22	30.6
Cyril Stober	2	2.8
Ray Ekpu	8	11.1
Tony Momoh	3	4.2
Late James Audu	3	4.2
Dr. Stanley Macebuh	1	1.4
Kalu Otise	2	2.8

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Journalists with one point nomination are Dr. Late Mee Mofe Damijo, Ishaya Mudy, Christian Anyanwu, Rambai Buhari and Awal Damina Dauda.

From the data, Dan Agbese, late Dele Giwa and Frank Olize are among the favourite Nigerian journalists.

The attitudes that call for the nomination of these journalists as the most preferred are compiled in Table 4.5.46 below.

Table 4.5.46: Factors that make people appreciate journalists and rate them as favourites

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Command of language	12	14.3
Boldness	32	38.1
Humour	15	17.9
Style	9	10.7
Intelligence	7	8.3
Objectivity	5	6.0
National broad coverage	4	4.8

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Results show that boldness in exposing the truth or hidden facts as the most important attribute a journalist should possess. While other highly appreciated attribute is the blend of humorous and good command of language.

Table 4.5.47 enumerates factors that will, if cultivated, can improve the performance of the Nigerian journalist significantly.

Table 4.5.47: How Nigerian journalists can improve upon their performance

Improvement	Frequency	Percentage
Adequate training	56	50.0
Improve remuneration	20	17.9
Be investigative/bold	5	4.5
Objectivity	7	6.3
Be ethical	9	8.0
Honesty	11	9.8
Computer literate	2	1.8
Reduce sentimentalism	2	1.8

Source: Field Survey 2002.

Adequate training and retraining ranks high as the most urgent need of performance requirement of journalists and closely followed by improvement in the remuneration of journalists.

4.6 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

The correlation coefficients (r) were calculated by the computer using a statistical software called the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The value were calculated at the .05 level of significance.

Table 4.6.48 Correlation coefficients of selected issues

Issues	Correlation (r)	Significance	P. Values
Whether columns influence Readers' view of society and government	.281	Significant	
Satisfaction with type of language used in the press	-0.047	Not significant	
Whether language used influences the reader	.057	Not significant	

Source: Field Survey 2002.

The correlation coefficient is the value that measures the strength of a relationship between two or more variables. For instance, the first value of .281 is the value of the relationship between the columns in a media and the reader's view of government and society. In other words, we want to find out the relationship between what readers read in a column and how such viewpoints influence their view of society and government.

4.6.1 The Role of the Press

Table 4.6.49 Access to newspapers

	Pearson correlation	.703(**)
How often do you read English language newspapers/magazines	Significant (2-tailed)	0
	N	229
How often do you read vernacular newspapers?	Pearson correlation	.132(*)
	Significant (2-tailed)	0.048
	N	225
Do you consider newspapers/magazines as reliable sources of information about government and politics?	Pearson correlation	.225(**)
	Significant (2-tailed)	0.001
	N	228
Do you discuss news stories raised in the media with friends/ neighbours	Pearson correlation	0.104
	Significant (2-tailed)	0.116
	N	230
* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)		
** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)		

Source: Field Survey 2002.

There exists a significant relationship in the accessibility of print sources and the frequency of reading English language newspapers and vernacular newspaper give $R = 0.703$, P value < 0.05 and $R = 0.132$ P value < 0.05 respectively. The implications are that where there is access to the print media sources, people will usually utilised them.

When people are interested in particularly news stories and consider the newspaper reliable, they will source for the paper wherever it may be. The test shows a significant relationship between those who have access to paper and their notion on its reliability as an information source, giving us a correlation score of $R =$

0.225 P value < 0.05. The implication is that people still consider the print media as a reliable information sources.

Whether those who have access to news discuss them with others friends and neighbours will be a determining factor to making available news materials so as to prevent rumours. The study reveals that majority of people do not discuss news stories giving us a non-signification relationship score of $R = 0.116$, P-value > 0.05.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the findings of our study on *Development Communication and Empowerment in Nigeria: The Case of the Press*. Recommendations are also drawn up based on the conclusions of the study. These recommendations are made based on the vital role of the press in the developmental process. As has been pointed out in this study, democracy is about people. It creates instruments and an enabling environment for people's participation in decisions or policies that affect their lives. It is our contention here that people's participation and conscientisation enables them to achieve empowerment. Once empowered, people will easily engage in the business of democratic governance which will enhance the stability and consequent development of a nation.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study focused on the role of the press in promoting participation and empowerment through democratic governance in Nigeria. The study yielded information on the following:

- i. The relevance of the press in the nation's socio-political developmental processes.
- ii. The relationship between a free press system and democratic governance.

- iii. Press roles and responsibilities in promoting developmental attributes like accountability, transparency and the freedom to communicate to all and by all in the society.
- iv. Diversity and choice in the Nigerian press – since a major objective of development has always been to extend the opportunity for individuals to take an equal and an effective part in the management of public affairs.

The concern expressed here is for direct participation in governance. From the standpoint of Dahl (1971) and development experts, the right to participate involves the freedom to express preferences, to make claims on government and to have them taken equally into account. According to Dahl, government responsiveness can really be seen as a probable outcome if the right to participate in making preferences, to compete and to express opposition are guaranteed.

This study confirmed our hypothesis and universally held belief that the Nigerian press performs a significant role, not only in the nation's political processes, but also in the survival of the citizens and government. Being the purveyors of news and information, the press plays an important role in educating the citizens of the nation. Gone are those days when Nigerians depended solely on the town crier to be attuned to the happenings in the community and nation.

An impressive number of Nigerians in our survey have access to newspapers, magazines, radio and television. The airwaves are there with

round-the-clock news and programme broadcasts with a wide choice range between the new fad FM stereo bands to the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), Voice of Nigeria (VON) and international news channels like the Cable News Network (CNN), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Voice of America (VOA), among other such channels.

Television, which revolutionised news and information dissemination, has experienced further democratisation. With the addition of cable satellite television, McLuhan's concept of the global village as Uyo (1996) has rightly observed, has evolved from an intellectual imagination to a *fait accompli*. The immediate impact of cable satellite television and other multi-faceted news and information sources like the Internet has been the creation of a global citizen with a world-centric cosmology. What has consequently happened is the breakdown of traditional national barriers and the near-universalisation of news and culture.

Thus, the contemporary urban Nigerian whose views are the predominant in our survey is no longer the 'robotic' by-product of the command-and-obey structure of despotic past. He is more than ever before a democrat. Moreover, he is far more informed about world politics, economics and culture; and not surprisingly sees the interrelationship between his own survival and that of people from other parts of the world.

The contemporary urban Nigerian is therefore quite sophisticated, and this is reflected in the quality and content of the news and information that he demands. A citizen's education is both a social necessity and a social

contract. A birth, we are indebted to our parents and nation for survival and growth as social beings. Our country, through its health policy and trained personnel, provided the conducive environment for survival. It also provided schools, religious organisations and media that launched our inevitable social education. Understanding this relationship and the need to perform our responsibilities appears more critical for our survival.

Out of necessity, we see a unity of purpose and common destiny of government and society; with the press as an important instrument of socio-political cohesion; and as Uyo (1996) has observed, "a lightning rod of developmental politics and economics, an agent of change, the custodian of history and the vanguard of a people struggling to free themselves from the yoke of neo-colonial and imperialistic manipulations".

With the foregone as background, our summary is now presented in the following sequence used on our questionnaire:

- i. Socio-demographic data on the respondents
- ii. The role of the press in Nigerian society
- iii. Literary images in the Nigerian press
- iv. The press and democratic governance for development
- v. Performance of Nigerian journalists

i. Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

This research laid emphasis on responses from politicians, and journalists as the two significant actors in the art of governance. The politicians represent the participants in governance, while the journalists

double as representatives of the people – acting as their eyes and ears –and also as the link between the government and the members of the public. These two groups constituted 80 per cent of the respondents, while other professional groups made up of teachers; civil servants and students make up the remaining 20 per cent.

It is important for the process of empowerment to address all relevant structures and sources of power. The structures and sources of power selected for this study are relevant but limited in the sense that the rural areas are not represented.

Important considerations in this dissertation also are gender differences in the labour force of the press organisations and patronage. Our findings reveal that 77 per cent of our respondents are male, while females constitute only 23 per cent. These findings confirm that there are significant gender differences in the participation of Nigerians in issues that affect them.

Other relevant demographic characteristics considered in this study include age, marital status and educational qualifications. Our findings indicate that 83 per cent of the respondents fall between ages 25 and 44, thus making the views of this age group the most dominant in the study.

The distribution of respondents by marital status reveals that 67 per cent of our survey population are married, while 30 per cent are single. The other 3 per cent were either divorced, separated or widowed. The high incidence of married people in our sample is quite interesting, encouraging and refreshing and puts to rest the stereotypical belief that most journalists

and politicians are unserious family people and generally preferred to be "swinging singles".

The distribution of respondents by educational qualifications reveals that more than half of the respondents have either the Ordinary National Diploma (OND); an equivalent or degree in the humanities. This finding is a positive indication that the participants in politics and journalism are not the illiterates that they were in the past, but are now more educated and have gone beyond the basics in secondary education or its equivalent. We can therefore argue that the professionals in this study have the prerequisite qualifications and that these are higher than the national average.

ii. **The Role of the Press in Development of Society**

The findings in this study confirmed the important developmental role of the press in the Nigerian society generally, but particularly as an agent of development. Indeed, it is a platitude to state this crucial role of the press, except that in this case as in others, it is supported by empirical evidence. This role is a primary reason why freedom of the press is regarded as a necessary safeguard of a democratic society.

As an agent of development, the media system teaches its lessons not only through the information it disseminates, but also through the way in which people participate in the system. For instance, as Mosel (1975) has pointed out, in enculturation, the child learns his culture not only from the content of what is taught but also from his experiences with the method by which he is taught. This same principle applies to communication systems.

This indirect learning which comes as a by-product of the way in which one learns has been called "deuteron learning" by Bateman (1977: 121-128). Thus, attitudes toward the communicator and habits for using and relating to information – as taught by the style of media participation – may sometimes have greater significance for political behaviour than the content of the information itself. This fact further makes participation in the press more compelling. Mosel (*op cit*) also points out that deuteron learning in the press systems is controlled not only by the media or press system alone but also to some extent by the general culture in which the system is embedded. Thus, the nature of the dependency of political socialisation on the press system varies according to the society.

(a) Participation in the press

It is the ability to read that prepares people to receive the political lessons of the printed word. Literacy levels in the urban centres in this study is quite high, especially among our respondents. One expects that the literacy level in the rural areas will be much lower, even though there will be a few literate people.

The findings of this study reveal that literacy has helped a large percentage of our population to patronise the press as an important news source proving that people in urban centres have access to the printed new materials, but often depend on newspapers and magazines bought by their organisations, libraries or neighbours. The written word still has great prestige and authority in Nigeria, probably because of the importance attached to

formal education. The poor financial state of the population seems to be the primary reason behind the occasional purchase of the printed media. Thus, the financial limitation of the population makes the newspapers and magazines to appear beyond their reach. This situation is cause for grave concern, because if there is financial limitations among the urban educated salary earners, where literacy is not a problem, then the situation in the villages is likely to be very bad indeed.

For a society that needs to be moved from the stage of a parochial or inactive political culture to a participant culture, the press still has very far to go in achieving its developmental goals. As Uyo (1996) has pointed out, the Nigerian press indeed parades titles that can meet these challenges. But then, there is the difference between role conception and role behaviour and obviously from the findings in this study, press performance does not match the mission proclaimed by their titles and mottoes.

The press in its current structure focus as reportorial form, issues discussed, language etc can only cater for a very few literate urban and semi-urban elites and even for these people, it does not breed genuine participation.

Another major limitation of the press in its current structure and focus is the neglect of feedback, which is an important indicator of participation. And the root of this problem can be traced back to the basic assumption in the development communication model which thought development was possible through contact with western ideas and technology. This was the

overall framework within which much of the initial work on communication and development occurred (Fies, 1976). This assumption was reinforced by the dominant paradigm of development, giving rise to the idea of a one-way, dependent flow of information.

Rahim (1976) has rightly observed that:

This has tended to block the researcher from seeing the reverse side flow of ideas and innovations from the poor to the rich, from the less developed to the more developed; from the peasants to the technicians, administrators and scientists (Rahim, 1976: 224).

Thus, the Western form of disseminating information by means of the mass media is clearly a one-way process. Most of the messages contain rules, orders or recommendations for people to behave or think in certain ways. But for development to occur, participation by the people is a prerequisite. At least, it is necessary for getting proposed changes accepted and implemented on a large scale.

(b) Language and media exposure

Another important finding in this study is the readership patterns by Nigerian languages. The study confirmed that the press readers daily or occasionally read newspapers and magazines in the English language. Surprisingly, majority of the reading public does not read vernacular print items. Non-existence of the printed media in the various Nigerian languages dominates the reasons for the non-reading of vernacular print news items. And even in the few cases where the vernacular press exists in a language,

the difficulty in assimilation and comprehension becomes a barrier in effectively using them. Our study reveals that amongst the very few newspapers produced in indigenous languages, the Hausa language newspapers are the most patronised, followed by Yoruba, 'others' and Igbo – the three major language groups in Nigeria.

These findings have serious implications for a press that is supposed to motivate and mobilise the populace to develop a participant political culture. The production of more newspapers in Nigerian languages will certainly improve on the press performance in participation, conscientisation and empowerment.

The problem of language, which is central to the development of a society should therefore be given due attention in the press.

Our study also revealed that news and information items enjoyed the most in newspapers and magazines. General interest news ranks first, followed by sports, editorials and cartoons as favourite areas of interest in the press. There is absence of developmental news, for instance, agricultural news in the press.

Although the primary focus of our study is on the press, we were also interested in finding out about the utilisation of radio and television as important news sources. Findings confirm that radio is the most popular media as almost all of our respondents indicated that they own radio sets; with also another large segment saying they also own television sets.

Telephones and computers are the least available of our modern communications media.

(c) Reliability of government as credible news source

Both the print and electronic press are geared towards the dissemination of news and information about government and society in general. The reason advanced for this suspicion, scepticism and general distrust is that these media are controlled or teleguided by the government and hence their news coverage would be biased and misleading. Other reasons given by the respondents are that the Nigerian press is sentimental and parochial and hence propagate primarily their angle of the news, with a good number of the respondents believing that the members of the press are easily bribed.

The findings in this study are similar to the perception of government or state involvement in the press in democratic nations like the United States of America (USA). Americans are generally distrustful and suspicious of the state and its involvement in the media (Fiss, 1990: 136). For the most part, they have looked upon the state with great distrust. For many the American First Amendment is seen as the apotheosis of this tradition. It is understood as a bar to state interference or intervention in the press and given almost an absolutist quality – that is there should never be government interference in the press. Fiss has pointed out that exceptions are permitted now and then, when the stakes are high enough as in the case of threat to national security,

but at its core, the First Amendment is generally read as creating a strong presumption against state interference with almost any form of speech.

In a democratic system, politicians use both the print and electronic media during electioneering campaigns. The findings confirmed television as having the greatest influence in the decision-making of Nigerian voters during elections. Television is closely followed by newspaper and radio respectively.

Respondents have also identified setbacks of the Nigerian press. Our findings reveal that a high percentage of respondents consider a major problem of the press as bias in news content and presentation; while that of television and radio is indicated as poor production quality and foreign influence.

In summary, the findings in this section on the role of the press confirm the importance and relevance of the press in the Nigerian society. Never before has its importance been so widely proven and recognised. Yet, herein lie the greatest weaknesses and failures of the press.

The general view about the operation of the press in developing societies like Nigeria is often labelled as disillusionment by communication experts (De Sola Pool, 1965). The press is conceded the potential function of education and enlightenment but it seems that while the media are often not effective instruments of constructive action, they may have some power to disorient and engender confusion in the society. They engender the revolution of rising expectations; the desire for new things about which their

readers and viewers learn, but they do not create a willingness to take the actions called for to obtain these good things.

Indeed as Zakes Mda (1993: 36) has correctly noted, the current emphasis in development communication is not only on access to communication media, but participation in press or media programming. The assumption is that participation in media production leads to participation in community development. This is a shift from the marketing approach, known as "persuasive communications to a participatory approach – which is the major position of this study. In persuasive communication, the media are used to beam messages or directives encouraging people to support a particular project or action and benefits that may follow are highlighted. Whereas in participatory communication, the message can emanate from any point and can be added to, questioned and responded to from any other point.

iii. Literary Images in the Nigerian Press

The arts and literary columns are regular features of newspapers and magazines. Radio and television often present documentaries/ interviews on literary issues.

Our findings reveal that a small percentage (below average) read the literary columns in newspapers, listen to radio or watch literary programmes on television. The few people that do read them do so out of personal interest.

The responses of our respondents about the influence of the arts/literary features or documentaries demonstrate that sometimes these columns contribute or influence their socio-political perspectives. We can therefore conclude that based on our findings, these columns are important because of the impact they have on the opinion of the public.

Respondents also indicated that newspapers and television are regarded as the media that most expressed arts/literary works. Another important consideration here is the impact of language used in the press on the public. Here, the press are vetted as the media that influences user's language the most, while radio is rated as the most effective media that conveys information about the government to the general public because of its large audience.

Cartoons have also become important images of the arts in newspapers and magazines. Our findings demonstrate that cartoons that make commentary on socio-political issues are the most popular. It is interesting to note that most respondents appreciate cartoons for the serious commentary they make and not just for their entertainment function.

From the foregone, it is obvious that the arts/literary features/documentaries have found relevance in the press and society at large because they make important commentary that influences public opinion.

iv. The Press and Democratic Governance

Central to our discussion on the press and democratic governance is the concept of development communication. Pye (1965: 4) has rightly observed that “communication is the web of human society, and the structure of a communication system with its well defined channels is in a sense the skeleton of the social body which envelopes it.”

He notes that the flow of communications determines the direction and pace of dynamic social development. Thus, it is possible to analyse all social processes in terms of the structure, content and flow of communication. As it has been extensively documented, communications encompasses the bulk of social behaviour, for the vital force of human relations is man’s capacity to send and receive in countless ways both intended and unintended messages (Hall, T. E., 1959: 4).

The analysis of the processes of communication in this study is one way of studying the social life of Nigerians. The term communication as has been used in the course of this study refers to the mass media industry – the press and others.

In the development of the American society, as pointed out elsewhere in this study, the very concept of development and also democracy has been inexorably linked to a belief in the need for the freedom and integrity of the press. In the American view, a free, independent and autonomous and preferably non-partisan press is an essential prerequisite for democratic governance.

Indeed, democracy has very high expectations of the press and mass media system. Gurevitch and Blumler (1990: 270), have pointed out that a democratic system requires that the press perform and provide the following functions and services for the political system:

- i. Surveillance of the socio-political environment, reporting developments likely to impinge positively or negatively on the welfare of citizens.
- ii. Meaningful agenda setting, identifying the very issues of the day, including the forces that have formed and may resolve them.
- iii. Platforms for an intelligible and illuminating advocacy by politicians and spokespersons of other causes and interest groups.
- iv. Dialogue across a diverse range of views, as well as between power holders (actual and prospective) and mass publics.
- v. Mechanism for holding official to account for how they have exercised power.
- vi. Incentives for citizens to learn, choose and become involved rather than merely to follow and be onlookers over the political process.
- vii. A principal resistance to the efforts of forces outside the media to subvert their independence, integrity and ability to serve the audience.
- viii. A sense of respect for the audience member as potentially concerned and able to make sense of his or her political environment.

Obviously, it is not easy for any system to achieve or serve these goals. Nonetheless, this study has found out how the Nigerian press performs some of these functions. In terms of reporting developments likely

to impinge positively or negatively on the welfare of citizens through investigative journalism, this study found that most respondents were of the opinion that journalists sometimes investigate stories, while a very small percentage credit them for doing so consistently or always. Investigative journalist plays a vital role in development communication in terms of digging out hidden facts, creating transparency and accountability.

The following were identified as factors deterring the consistent practice of investigative journalism in Nigeria:

- i. Lack of press freedom
- ii. Lack of conducive atmosphere
- iii. Owner's vested interests
- iv. Poor incentives for journalists
- v. Journalists' inability to resist bribery

To promote accountability and transparency in governance, the media in a developing country like Nigeria are expected to act on behalf of the citizenry by guarding against abuses of power by office holders. Thus, the media are expected to be the watchdog and channel of holding public officials to account for how they have exercised the power vested in them by the people.

Our findings demonstrate that most of the times, journalists do not dig up facts about those in governance for fear of the government machinery and what it can do to them, and also due to financial constraints of media organisations which cannot foot the bills of investigative journalism.

However, investigative journalism is readily employed in special situations as enumerated below:

- i. Media organisations' level of interest
- ii. When there are problems in leadership
- iii. During elections
- iv. When leaders involved are removed from power or when they die.

A significant concern in this study is the relationship between the press and government. For instance, does government determine how the Nigerian press operates? Our findings reveal that an overwhelming majority of respondents agree that the government has various levels of influence on the operation of the press.

Since it has been confirmed that government exerts influence on the operation of the Nigerian press, our study identified which system of government will likely guarantee significant press freedom and good governance. A high percentage of those interviewed vetted that a democratic state best guarantees press freedom and good governance, that will enhance development.

Thus, from our findings, we can conclude that democracy is the most recommended system of governance in Nigeria.

In the area of access and diversity, this study found that the focus of the press and perspective is slanted towards the following categories:

- i. Urban dwellers
- ii. Elites

iii. The rich or wealthy in society.

The empowerment of the less educated and rural dwellers whose interest should be focus of the press is relegated.

Such concerns have to do with the relationship of the press to the public at large. For example, the proposition that the press should serve the public's "right to know" and offer options for meaningful political choices and nourishment for effective participation in civic affairs.

The questions of access and diversity are contentious issues not only in the Nigerian press but also the American media.

Judith Lichtenberg (1990) identifies central issues in this contention today as those that "have to do with diversity in and access to the press". They include "the availability of the press to diverse points of view; to perspectives other than those of a privileged and powerful majority" and "a lack of significant diversity of opinion and points of view represented in the news and the public affairs coverage of the media".

Over forty years after the landmark report by Robert Hutchins and his Commission on Freedom of the Press, Barbara W. Hartung published in the *Journalism Quarterly* an article examining the "Attitudes Toward the Applicability of the Hutchins Report". She concluded that "it is somewhat startling to find how contemporary the directives of the commission are and how unchanging the problems of the press in America appear to be".

Hartung's complaint is strikingly similar to the classic statement drafted in the mid-1940s by the Hutchins Commission. The Commission's report, on

its first page, went straight to the issue of access. It charged that the press is "available to a small, minority of the people only and that "the few who are able to use the machinery of the press as an instrument of mass communication have not provided a service adequate to the needs of society". The question of participation in the press by the masses is therefore unresolved. How has the press tried to solve this problem?

Similar complaints have recurred throughout the last century, both before and after the Hutchins period. Will Irwin, in a fifteen-part series in *Colliers* magazine in 1991, lamented the control of the press by the business class, the resulting suppression of unpopular opinions and news, and the difficulty that unmoneyed individuals encounter in asserting their voice.

More recently, Ben Bagdikian reported that:-

By the beginning of the 1980s, most major American media, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, books and movies were controlled by fifty corporations. Twenty corporations control more than half the 61 million daily newspapers sold every day, twenty corporations control more than half of the revenues of the country's 11,000 magazines, three corporations control most of the revenues and audience in television, ten corporations in radio, eleven corporations in all kinds of books and four corporations in motion pictures" (Bagdikian, 1990: 189).

The inevitable is to raise as Bagdikian does "the questions whether our press are free to exercise their traditional role of mediating among the forces of society at a time when they have become an integral part of one of those forces" (Bagdikian, *op.cit.*: 189).

Obviously, continuing concentration has the potential of reducing the incentive for social responsibility by taking decision makers further from local affairs; elevating business considerations over developmental and further aligning media managers with the power-class; institutions of business and government.

The Nigerian case has probably not reached such extents but it is clear that the press is headed in the same direction as the American case reflecting the interests of the powerful, literate and wealthy.

These developments together with the problems of access and diversity strongly suggest the need for some action that takes into account contemporary economic, political and professional reality that builds on the social responsibility of the press and consciously work towards enhancing participation at all different levels – village, town to city – rural-urban, semi-literate and literate.

v. Performance of Journalists

Most of what we learn about the socio-political events and processes taking place in society come in form of reports compiled by individuals who work with the press. These individuals are the journalists.

The press do more than merely report events; they also give meaning to the facts that are reported. Though the events themselves are usually reported accurately in most cases, they are seldom presented without interpretation and characterisation. For instance, the mass media of two different countries or newspapers of different political orientations in the same

country may report the same violent demonstration; one describing it as an expression of the people's voice, while the other perceives it as a riot by an unruly mob. In the same vein, to the Israelis, Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) activists are "terrorists", but to Arabs, they are "patriots".

Another example is the case of Bobby Sands who died of a hunger strike in Northern Ireland and was denounced by the British as a "murderer", while acclaimed by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Irish Catholics in Ulster as a "martyr".

The picture conveyed may not be deliberately distorted but only on rare occasions is the image completely objective. As Kousailas (1982) has rightly noted, when we speak of the press, we speak of human beings (journalists) who actually initiate the messages or select from a variety of incoming messages those they consider worth bringing to the public's attention.

Reporters, producers, editors, broadcasters, columnists and editorialists who make up the journalism profession do not come from a special breed produced in ideologically or politically sterilised bottles. They, too, see a given event through the glasses of their lifelong experiences; they too have stored attitudes, beliefs, prejudices and emotional attachments that often creep into their work. In developed societies, these personal elements may be toned down through professionalism. But in developing countries, it may be suppressed by subjecting the communicator to the control of the governing elite.

This extensive background about the nature and work of journalists who are the major actors behind media messages has been presented above in order to help in our discussion and summary of the performance of the Nigerian journalist.

It is obvious that the Nigerian press as a machinery depends heavily on the journalist. The temperament, attitude and perceptions of the journalists and their leaders determine to a large extent what comes out of the media. As watchdogs and vanguards of the people's right to know, an important quality of any journalist is boldness.

Our findings reveal that our respondents rated Nigerian journalists as sometimes fearful. Not surprisingly, the respondents vetted the journalists as performing below average.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that despite the dismal rating of their performance, a large number (majority) of the respondents indicated that journalists are always relevant to society.

Remuneration and the general welfare of the journalist relates directly or indirectly to job performance. Our findings demonstrate that Nigerian journalists are not well paid; thus confirming the direct linkage between poor job performance and poor remuneration.

Although journalists are the major actors behind media messages, our findings confirm their limitations. Most of our respondents indicated that media owners are the dominant characters that determine media output. Given that our results established the fact that media owners play a dominant

role in media output, government ownership of the media becomes an open debate.

Our findings reveal that majority of people believe that media ownership is best left in private hands. This will give room for different groups or communities to own their media.

The study also made an important discovery in terms of how journalists can improve upon their performance. From our findings, adequate training and retraining rank high as the most urgent means to improve the performance of journalists; following closely is the improvement in their remuneration.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings in the study and the foregone discussion, the following conclusions have been drawn:

- a. After a process of elaborate inquiry and analysis, the study has confirmed the relevance of the press in the nation's developmental processes. However, the press in its current structure, focus, content, language and flow of information can only cater for a limited number of literate and urban Nigerians and consequently does not promote the much sought after participation, conscientisation and empowerment of the mass public for development.

As Schramm (1985: 34) correctly notes, "the structure of the press or social communications reflects the development of that society. The size or the development of the press and their audiences,

the stretching out and multiplying of communications chains -- reflects the economic development of society. The ownership of communication facilities, the controls upon communication reflect the political development and philosophy of that society. The patterns of communication networks, which determine where information flows and who shares it with whom, reflects the homogeneity of culture and geography within a society."

- (b) The relationship between a free media system and democratic governance has been established. There are serious constraints on the freedom of the press in Nigeria, even with constitutional backing. As has been extensively documented, a free socio-political society cannot exist without a free communications media; and democracy, which is an essential element of development, involves public debate and open discussions, thus making the free exchange of ideas, opinions and information essential. The press in the present democratic dispensation in Nigeria is struggling to enhance these values and to serve as both forum of debate and sources of information on which citizens' discussions can be based.
- (c) In spite of limited successes of the Nigerian press, our findings lead us to conclude that democracy is the most recommended system of governance in Nigeria that will guarantee press freedom and development.

- (d) Press roles and responsibilities in promoting characteristics of good governance such as accountability, transparency, conscientisation, popular participation and the right to communicate to all and by all in the press are very limited and call for a total reorientation and refocusing of the press towards the participatory approach.
- (e) The focus of the Nigerian press is slanted towards urban dwellers, elites and wealthy men. The empowerment of the poor, the less educated, rural dwellers and women whose interests should be the concern of press is negligible. These problems have to do with the contentious questions of access and diversity. The commitment of the press to social responsibility, which should take care of some of the problems of access and diversity seems to be deepening and standing on increasingly unsteady pillars.
- (f) There are significant gender differences in the participation of men and women in politics and journalism. A very high percentage of men are represented in this survey. Gender has therefore remained unchanged in this sphere.
- (g) Although a relatively small percentage of people patronise the arts and literary columns in newspapers and documentary programmes about the arts or literature on radio and television, this study has demonstrated that these literary materials have found relevance in the

members of the audience and that they make important commentary and influence public opinion to some extent.

- (h) Language use in the press has great influence on public perception. Newspapers and magazines are regarded as the media that influence users' language the most.
- (i) The media as a machinery depends heavily on the journalist. The attitude and perceptions of the journalists and their leaders determine to a large extent what comes out of the media. The journalists and owners need to have more interest in the development or progress of the nation.
- (j) The Nigerian journalist is regarded as very relevant to society; but a major setback is the very low rating of journalists' job performance. Training and retraining are the urgent means to improve the performance of journalists.
- (k) The Nigerian government and media owners generally play a dominant role in determining media output and this posture questions their commitment to freedom of the press and development.

A. J. Liebling's maxim that "freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one" (A. J. Liebling, *The Press*) should challenge media owners to prove otherwise.

- (l) Consequently, the Nigerian press enjoys limited freedom, with the print media enjoying a higher level of freedom than the electronic.
- (m) Investigative journalism, which enhances accountability and transparency in government, is not widely and consistently practised in Nigeria.
- (n) In terms of readership of the press by languages, this study has proved that Nigerians read their dailies or magazines mainly in the English language. A majority of the reading public does not have ready vernacular print items. This has serious implications for participation by those literate only in local languages.
- (o) This study concludes that it is important to have some faith in the media. But after that, faith should depend on the political realities of our country and the world today.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) Policy Implications

Communication experts have identified four policy issues about the development of the press which a developing country like Nigeria must resolve.

First and foremost, a country must decide how much of its scarce resources to invest in the press. Secondly, they must decide what roles to assign the public and private sectors and third, they must decide how much freedom to allow or how much control to impose, how much uniformity to

require and how much diversity to permit. Fourth, they must decide the level at which to pitch media output.

Thus, government in any country determines to a large extent the freedom of speech and expression that affects the press. It is therefore important for policy makers to understand what a developing society's commitment to freedom of the press should be. A government's commitment to freedom of speech and the press is often determined by its level of development. For instance, whereas it is easier for a developed country to have a completely free press and free communication, it is much harder for a country in the early stages of development to do the same.

Nonetheless, some writers, noting the American First Amendment's mention of freedom of speech argue that the press is entitled to special protections beyond those accorded speech in general. Yet, when we examine the most famous arguments for freedom of the press, we find nothing to distinguish that from those for freedom of speech and expression. Mill's (1977: 232) discussion, *On Liberty*, begins by asserting the need for "liberty of the press" and proceeds to enumerate arguments for freedom of expression in general.

Similarly, in *What is Enlightenment?* Kant (1970) defends freedom of the press with the general arguments for the benefits of freedom of thought and discussion. The press is treated as a voice, albeit a more powerful one or at par with individual voices, and defending press freedom is tantamount to a general defence of free speech.

Indeed, the argument for freedom of the press is an argument for a more general freedom of expression. However, it does not follow that whatever supports freedom of speech also supports freedom of the press for at least two related reasons:

- i. First, considerations internal to the theory of free speech itself may provide reasons for limiting freedom of the press, that is, the claim that the contemporary press may suppress information and stifle ideas rather than promote them.
- ii. Secondly, the modern press consists largely of vast and complex institutions that differ in essential respects both from individuals and from the early press around which the concept of freedom of the press grew.

Thus, freedom of the press should be contingent on the degree to which it promotes certain values at the core of our interests and existence generally. Freedom of the press in other words is an instrumental good. It is good if it does certain things and not especially good otherwise.

(b) A favourable governmental policy is important even for the development of the private press. Policy on import of newsprint, development of newsprint sources, placing of legal advertising, telegraph rates, and many other policies may either facilitate or inhibit the growth of the private press.

There are usually other reasons for the policy decision that is usually made to play down investment by government in the press. One reason is

disillusionment with the usefulness. However, the Nigerian government or any government in a developing nation cannot afford to take such an unprogressive stance in the face of the current technological revolution taking place in communication.

(c) The structure of vertical communication where the flow runs from the top to the bottom (that is from leaders to the followers), where the few talk to the many about the needs and problems of the many from the standpoint of the few should be discarded and abandoned. Rather, the new orientation should be participatory – in other words, there should be a change in outlook. There is a necessity for more information from a plurality of sources and the opportunity for a two-way flow or feedback between participants in the process. True development in the communication process will not take place without increased participation by readers, viewers and listeners in decision making about programming, etc.

(d) The exclusion of disadvantaged groups in communication channels or the press is a major problem. Their problems are no less crucial than those of the powerful, but this category of people exist in Nigeria - the poor, the handicapped, those subjected to cultural or economic discrimination, ethnic, language and religious minorities, women, children and the youth must also have a voice in the press.

(e) Agencies of mass communication should accept the responsibilities of common carriers of information and discussion and

provide the diversity, criticism and interchange necessary for society to thrive.

(f) Press freedom imposes moral responsibility on journalists to be objective, fair and accurate, to seek the truth always and uphold the ethics of the profession at all times. Experts have devised a “professional responsibility model” to reinvigorate journalists. In this model, as Stepp (1990) points out, the notion of social responsibility would be instilled and enforced at the professional (as opposed to the institutional) level. This model would acknowledge the continuing viability of the social responsibility goal and would formulate a new strategy for enforcing it based on a maturing understanding of contemporary journalism. The strategy could incorporate the following objectives:

(i) Co-opting the professional ideology and building on journalists' image of themselves as independent and accountable. Although corporate structures may be resistant to change and unable or unwilling to mandate social responsibility, the work force is more willing. As Lambeth, Breed, Bagdikian and others have noted, journalists tend to be deeply influenced by other journalists and by news room conditions. In essence, journalism is a profession that runs itself. In spite of their administrative authority, publishers and managers remain fundamentally dependent on journalists. Because of the frantic and relentless nature of their work, managers concede much of their operational authority to the news room. Here, individual journalists

have the power to influence content and determine the role a medium plays.

Journalism has no formal universally accepted ideology, but its ethical standards travel powerfully and informally through the professional network. That network can be used to promote a unified and revived notion of social responsibility that will promote development through journalism schools, professional associations, academic literature and via career training apparatus.

- (ii) Another important strategy is broadening public exposure to education about the press and its social role. This involves acting to influence institutions and journalists from the outside; by changing their expectations through changing public expectations. A public that is educated about the need for a socially responsible press becomes more participant and capable of pressuring the press to fulfil its obligations.

Journalism education for the consumer is generally neglected within public schools and universities. A serious effort to remedy this deficiency could produce a healthy new demand for a more active audience – and a responsive press.

- (iii) Encouraging government to abandon its over-regulatory role and limit itself to assistance in public affairs should have no role in applying professional press responsibility, there is no reason to forbid it from acting in a manner generally supportive of free speech. It could do this

by among other things lowering the rate of production materials, and the financial underwriting of the press, like National Public Radio and Television. In any case, the scepticism, suspicion and general distrust that attract government regulation should challenge both the government and the public to be objective, fair and truthful. Indeed, we must keep in mind that regulation by government is sometimes as evil as that by corporations or media organisations.

(g) Both government and private organisations should explore the possibilities of printing newspapers and magazines in indigenous Nigerian languages to save them from extinction and increase participation. Media organisations will do well to add vernacular editions to their current publications.

(h) Media organisations should improve the quality, content and scope of general news stories, editorials, sports and cartoons reflect more on developmental issues because these seem to be the most popular among readers.

(i) The press in a developing and diverse society like Nigeria should contribute to unity and the feeling of nation-ness. As Schramm (1985) has correctly observed, there must be a growth of "national loyalties and awareness, supplementing local loyalties and local awareness. Peoples of different cultures, different languages, and different political and religious

beliefs must come to realise their common interest and the usefulness of working together toward these goals”.

However, the citizen cannot extend his/her environment unless the press system facilitates the process. The press and the other mass media must carry news and viewpoints of the nation and they must reach the village through community newspapers.

(j) To promote participation, conscientisation and empowerment, new innovations should be promoted by the press and their organisations. For instance, group oral reading of newspapers like newspaper clubs. Pass-along readership chains and the verse editorial.

The first two are social innovations which serve to extend the range of audience exposure and participation. In the press, the third series to increase the attractiveness and informal circulation of newspaper's editorial content.

(i) Group oral reading: In villages there are occasional instances of newspapers being read aloud by one person to others. However, such occasions are becoming rarer because of public television viewing centres. The press organisations and editors will do well to revive this practice.

(ii) Pass-along readership: In villages, the writer has discovered numerous instances of multiple readerships, wherein a newspaper is passed from one person to another along a fairly regular circuit. The membership of this “chain” may not be rigid, but it tends to be stable.

Nigerian newspapers and magazines often contain a liberal amount of non-temporal news; thus interest can survive the delay of pass-along.

It is pertinent to conclude that the press can be a far more potent instrument of development than has yet been recognised in Nigeria and other developing nations. However, for their potential to be effectively used, their development must be linked to effective grassroots participatory political organisation.

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Newspapers and Magazines

The Guardian, daily newspaper, Lagos.

The New Nigerian, daily newspaper, Kaduna.

Newswatch, newsmagazine, Lagos, February 18, 2002.

The Nigerian Standard, daily newspaper, Jos.

Daily Times, daily newspaper, Lagos.

The News, newsmagazine, Lagos.

CODESRIA - LIBRARY

APPENDIX 1
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Postgraduate School
Ahmadu Bello University
Zaria

October 2000

Dear Respondent,

I am a Ph.D. student with the Ahmadu Bello University, Samaru-Zaria. I am conducting a study on Development Communication and Empowerment in Nigeria.

This study aims at eliciting information about the role and performance of the Nigerian media in promoting the ideals of development communication like communication for all, transparency, accountability, freedom of speech, etc. with a view to developing strategies that will hopefully help the media and the government improve on their performance.

The information you will provide is purely for research and academic purposes and your identity will not be revealed. Please consider this your own contribution towards a better Nigeria.

Your honest responses will therefore be appreciated.

Thanks for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Christy G. E. Best (Mrs)
Ph.D/FASS/15852/97-98

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE STUDY OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION AND EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIA

A. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Please tick the category that is most appropriate to you

1. Age group

- a. 18-24 years []
- b. 25-34 years []
- c. 35-44 years []
- d. 45-54 years []
- e. 55-64 years []
- f. above 64 []

2. What is your sex?

- a. Male []
- b. Female []

3. What is your marital status?

- a. Married []
- b. Single []
- c. Divorced []
- d. Separated []
- e. Widowed []
- f. Other (specify) _____

4. What is your educational qualification?
- a. First school (primary) certificate and below []
 - b. West African School Certificate (WASC/SSCE) []
 - c. OND/Equivalent []
 - d. B.Sc./Equivalent []
 - e. M.Sc./Equivalent []
 - f. Ph.D. []
 - g. Other (specify) _____
-

5. What is your occupation/profession (please, specify):
-

B. THE DEVELOPMENT ROLE OF THE PRESS

Please take time to answer accurately.

1. Do you have access to newspapers/magazines?
- a. Always []
 - b. Sometimes []
 - c. Not at all []
2. If yes, then how?
- a. Buy own newspaper/magazine []
 - b. I depend on friends who buy []
 - c. I depend on library/common room []
 - d. Others (specify) _____

3. How often do you buy newspapers?

a. Daily

b. Occasionally

c. Not at all

Please explain why? _____

4. How often do you buy magazines?

a. Weekly

b. Occasionally

c. Not at all

Please explain why? _____

5. How often do you read English language newspapers/magazines?

a. Daily

b. Sometimes

c. Not at all

Please explain why? _____

6. How often do you read vernacular newspapers/magazines?

- a. Daily []
- b. Sometimes []
- c. Never []

Please explain why? _____

7. Which vernacular newspaper/magazine do you read?

- a. Igbo language []
- b. Hausa language []
- c. Yoruba language []
- d. Nupe language []
- e. Kanuri language []
- f. Others

(specify): _____

8. What do you enjoy/like in newspapers/magazines? (tick as many as possible)

- a. Editorials []
- b. Cartoons []
- c. News stories []
- d. Personal columns []
- e. Arts/literary columns []
- f. Advertisement []

g. Others

(specify): _____

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

9. Which of the following do you own? (tick as many as applicable)

a. Radio

b. Television set

c. Telephone

d. Computer

e. Others

(specify): _____

10. How often do you watch television?

a. Daily

b. Sometimes

c. Not at all

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

11. How often do you listen to radio programmes?

a. Daily

b. Occasionally

c. Not at all

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

12. Do you consider newspapers/magazines as reliable sources of information about government and politics?

a. Always []

b. Sometimes []

c. Not at all []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

13. Do you consider radio and television as reliable sources of news about government and politics?

a. Always []

b. Sometimes []

c. Not at all []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

14. Which of the following media influence your decisions during election campaigns? (Tick as many as applicable)

a. Television

b. Newspapers

c. Magazines

d. Radio

e. Others (specify): _____

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

15. Do you discuss news stories raised in the media with friends/neighbours?

a. Daily

b. Sometimes

c. Not at all

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

16. Which newspaper(s) do you buy regularly?

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

17. Which of the following magazines do you buy regularly?

a. The Week []

b. Newswatch []

c. Tell []

d. Hotline []

e. Crystal []

f. Trust []

g. Other (specify): _____

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

18. Please, list what you don't like about Nigerian newspapers and magazines.

19. Which of the following programmes do you enjoy on radio? (Tick as many as applicable).

a. News broadcasts []

b. Interviews []

c. Music []

- d. News commentary []
- e. Health programmes []
- f. Advertisements []
- g. Sports []
- h. Vernacular programmes []
- i. Others (specify): _____

20. Which of the following programmes do you enjoy on television? (Tick as many as applicable)

- a. News broadcasts []
- b. Films/movies []
- c. Music []
- d. Sports []
- e. Advertisements []
- f. Interviews []
- g. Documentaries []
- h. Other (specify): _____

21. Please, list what you don't like about Nigerian radio and television programmes.

C. LANGUAGE USE AND THE ARTS IN THE MEDIA

1. Do you read the literary or arts column in the newspaper/magazine?

a. Always []

b. Sometimes []

c. Not at all []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

2. Do you get information about government and politics on the literary or arts columns?

a. Always []

b. Sometimes []

c. Not at all []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

3. Do you think the arts/literary columns contribute to democratic governance?

a. Always []

b. Sometimes []

c. Not at all []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

4. Would you say this column influences your view of society and government?

a. Always []

b. Sometimes []

c. Not at all []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

5. Which of the following media help you appreciate the arts (literary works, art, writers, etc) and their messages? (Tick as many as applicable).

a. Television []

b. Magazine []

c. Radio []

d. Newspapers []

e. Others (specify): _____

6. Are you satisfied with the type of language (grammar) used in the Nigerian media?

a. Always []

b. Sometimes []

c. Not at all []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

7. Does the language used influence you?

a. Always []

b. Sometimes []

c. Not at all []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

8. Which media would you say influences your language use the most?

a. Newspapers []

b. Television []

c. Radio []

d. Magazines []

e. Others

(specify): _____

9. Which media would you say are more effective in conveying messages about governance/politics? (Tick as many as applicable.)

a. Newspapers []

b. Television []

c. Radio []

d. Magazines []

e. Others

(specify): _____

10. What type of cartoons do you like in newspapers/magazines?

- a. Political cartoons []
- b. Social cartoons []
- c. Others

(specify): _____

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

D. THE MEDIA, GOVERNANCE AND EMPOWERMENT

Please take time to answer the questions accurately.

1. Do you think investigative journalism is practised in the Nigerian media?

- a. Always []
- b. Sometimes []
- c. Not at all []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

2. How often does the media dig-up facts about those in leadership positions?

- a. Always []
- b. Regularly []
- c. Occasionally []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

3. Does the media dig up facts about social problems?

a. Always []

b. Regularly []

c. Occasionally []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

4. How often do you think the media should dig up facts about governments and societal problems?

a. Always []

b. Regularly []

c. Occasionally []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

5. Which media in your opinion is better placed to practice investigative journalism?

a. Television []

b. Newspapers []

c. Radio []

d. Magazines []

e. Others (specify): _____

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

6. Does the type of government in power determine how the media operate?

a. Always []

b. Sometimes []

c. Not at all []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

7. Which system of government in your opinion will guarantee press freedom and good governance?

a. Secular state (no official religion) []

b. Theocratic state (sharia/Christian state) []

c. Democratic state []

d. Military government []

E. Others (specify): _____

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

8. How would you rate the performance of the media in keeping the public informed about governance?

a. Excellent []

b. Very good []

c. Good []

d. Poor []

e. Very poor []

f. Others (specify): _____

9. Whose interest and aspirations does the Nigerian media represent?

(Tick as many as applicable.)

a. Rural dwellers []

b. Women []

c. Urban dwellers []

d. Educated elite []

e. Handicapped []

f. Wealthy/well-placed []

g. Others (specify): _____

F. PERFORMANCE OF JOURNALISTS

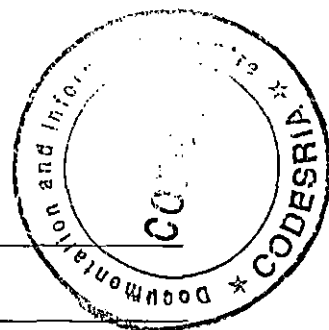
1. Do you consider the Nigerian journalist bold and fearless?

a. Always []

b. Regularly []

c. Occasionally []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____



2. How would you rate the performance of the journalists as watchdogs of society?

a. Excellent []

b. Very good []

c. Good []

d. Poor []

e. Very poor []

f. Others (specify): _____

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

3. In your opinion are journalists relevant to society?

a. Always []

b. Regularly []

c. Occasionally []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

4. Do you think Nigerian journalists are well paid?

a. Always []

b. Regularly []

c. Occasionally []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

5. In your opinion, do Nigerian journalists enjoy freedom of expression or are often pressured to take a particular stand?

a. Always []

b. Regularly []

c. Occasionally []

Please give reasons for your choice: _____

6. You can't please everyone but whom does the Nigerian journalist seem to please? (Tick as many as applicable.)

a. Owners []

b. Government []

c. Professional ethics []

d. Politicians []

e. Ordinary citizens []

f. Others

(specify): _____

7. Who do you think decides what events to cover?

a. Owners []

b. Government []

- c. Reporter []
- d. Editor []
- e. Don't know []
- f. Others (specify): _____

8. In your opinion, who is the dominant character in the final decision about what is produced or published?

- a. Editor []
- b. Reporter []
- c. Politicians []
- d. Government []
- e. Owners []
- f. Don't know []
- g. Others (specify): _____

9. Do you think government should own any media?

- a. Always []
- b. Sometimes []
- c. Not at all []

Please give reasons for your

choice: _____
